United Nations S/PV.5379

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5379th meeting

Thursday, 23 February 2006, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bolton	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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06-25109 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, Brazil, Canada and Singapore, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and by His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno: Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address publicly the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping and the progress achieved to date to tackle it.

As I begin, I must say a few words of admiration for the efforts of His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, the Secretary-General's Adviser on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel. He has given us unflinching diplomatic and practical support on this issue. His involvement has been invaluable, and we are grateful for it. I also must highlight the exceptional leadership Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute has demonstrated this past year in galvanizing the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations system as a whole to deal with this problem more seriously than we ever have in the past.

Most of all, I express deep appreciation for the amount of time, energy and political attention that Member States have invested recently in seeking solutions to the problem. The troop-contributing countries especially deserve praise for engaging with the Secretariat and the membership at large on issues of extreme sensitivity and of great importance to their national honour. I stress the word "honour", because it has been earned at the cost of the lives of some of their finest uniformed personnel.

Security Council members know well that just some weeks ago three Jordanian soldiers died fighting gang members while helping to strengthen a central checkpoint on Haiti's most dangerous road. Not long before that a Canadian Royal Mounted Police officer was killed in an ambush while patrolling in Port-au-Prince. In the jungles of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, eight Guatemalan special forces soldiers lost their lives in a firefight with a hateful militia group. A year ago this week nine of their

comrades from Bangladesh also fell in the line of duty in clashes with armed thugs.

Unfortunately, they are not alone. This is a dangerous business, claiming and threatening the lives of men and women from Peru to Pakistan, Ireland to India, Bolivia to Brazil. But despite the risks, day in and day out, United Nations personnel — civilians, military and police alike — from 120 countries get on with doing their jobs in tough conditions and at great personal sacrifice.

We dishonour those brave men and women when we fail to prevent or punish those from within their ranks who victimize the very people peacekeepers are meant to protect and serve. I am not so sure that this was fully understood a few years ago as clearly as it is today. Two years ago, prior to the revelation that a shockingly large number of United Nations peacekeepers had committed sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, neither we in DPKO nor Member States openly discussed or fully appreciated the magnitude of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping.

Today, not only is the severity of the problem openly recognized, but the General Assembly has adopted a comprehensive strategy to tackle it, building on the collective efforts of Prince Zeid, DPKO and the United Nations system at large. This strategy focuses on prevention and enforcement, and it will — upon approval by the General Assembly of a policy on victim assistance — incorporate remediation as well.

We have already made concrete and meaningful progress to implement that strategy. Before discussing this, though, I want to be clear up front that we still have a considerable way to go. It must be said that not all troop contingents or staff on the ground fully support — even after all the negative publicity and attention — aspects of the zero-tolerance policy, particularly as it pertains to prostitution. We will need to work together to address that point. We also need to strengthen markedly the capacity of peacekeeping operations and of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to investigate violations while respecting due process. Once we have overcome those hurdles, we expect to narrow significantly the continuing gap between zero tolerance and full compliance. Until then, as we even more aggressively seek out non-compliance, measured against a higher standard than ever before, the progress being made will not seem obvious, nor will it be enough.

Let me now refer to the progress that we have achieved. We are making headway in laying the foundations for the prevention of the problem in the longer term. Two years ago, we did not even have a uniform standard governing what is, and what is not, considered to be sexual exploitation and abuse. One can hardly prevent the problem if one cannot define it clearly and consistently. Today, we can. Thanks to the efforts of the General Assembly last year, all United Nations civilian staff members, military personnel, contingents, United Nations volunteers and contractors are bound by the same very strict standards outlined in the Secretary-General's prohibitions on sexual exploitation and abuse.

In the past, we did not do enough to promulgate, publicize and train personnel on whatever standards were on the books. Today, we most certainly do. Between 79 and 90 per cent of civilian police and military personnel receive mandatory training on sexual exploitation and abuse. Our aim is 100 per cent.

We have also developed tools to reinforce that training and its underlying message of the duty of care that every peacekeeper has to the people whom they are meant to help. DPKO has worked with an outside professional company to produce a film on the code of conduct for peacekeepers. It has been widely distributed in the field and translated into a dozen languages. I am pleased to report that it has been well received.

We have developed and are making use of other innovative tools and training materials to educate and inform personnel. They include an online e-learning standards of conduct module, pocket cards, mission-readiness booklets distributed to staff prior to deployment, security briefings and posters and brochures on sexual exploitation and abuse and human trafficking — prepared, I might add, in six languages — as well as other public information tools.

Our personnel are not the only people whom we are targeting with this material. We are sharing it with host populations as well. They have a right to know the standards we expect of our people. They are also often in a better position to know when our personnel are violating those high standards. We are now actively encouraging and making it easier for the local

population to bring breaches of conduct to our attention.

But prevention cannot be achieved through training, information and public outreach alone. Welfare is another important part of the equation, as armed forces throughout the world know all too well. This is especially true when uniformed personnel, as well as civilians, are deployed in quasi war-zones in the remotest parts of the world. Missions are now addressing that issue as a high priority. Most are now creating constructive recreational outlets, and several have even established, from existing resources, multipurpose sporting, socializing and dining facilities. Those are the types of initiatives included in our welfare strategy and standard operating procedures on welfare promulgated and sent to all heads of mission last month. In our discussions in the General Assembly, we will encourage troop-contributing countries to make use, in the mission area, of the welfare stipend paid by the Organization for every military peacekeeper. It is important that the issue of welfare and recreation be a priority, with a view to keeping soldiers busy when they are not on duty.

With regard to enforcement, we have also made some progress. During 2005, investigations have been completed into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving 296 peacekeeping personnel, the breakdown by category being 84 civilians, 21 police and 191 military. So far, 17 civilians, 16 police and 137 military personnel have been dismissed or repatriated. Those numbers include six commanders. For the past year, we had been making managers and commanders aware that they will be held accountable for those under their chain of command, and we mean it. We are in the process of making this accountability part of their performance evaluation. We have also sought and received the cooperation of two Member States in repatriating entire units for misconduct, in part related to sexual exploitation and abuse and in part related to other misconduct.

One of the major reasons why we have made significant headway in the areas of enforcement and prevention is that Member States have recently given us the means to ensure that professional experts are dedicated to the task full time. As recommended by the Zeid report and endorsed by the General Assembly, we have designed, recruited for and staffed a multi-disciplinary conduct and discipline team at DPKO Headquarters, in addition to eight conduct and discipline teams established in peacekeeping operations in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and Timor-Leste.

The conduct and discipline teams develop policy, provide oversight of disciplinary issues and ensure the coherent application of United Nations standards of conduct. In missions, the teams provide policy advice to heads of mission on discipline, receive allegations from complainants, collaborate with the Integrated Mission Training Centres and help the mission leadership maintain a watchful eye on all issues related to conduct and discipline. The field has largely welcomed that important tool in the arsenal to combat sexual exploitation and abuse as well as other forms of indiscipline.

In addition, the conduct and discipline teams are crucial in bringing the outreach to the host populations, to which I referred earlier. They have been active in making communities aware of the various methods — by telephone, e-mail or in person — through which complaints can be made in a confidential setting. In the middle of the year, we will formally launch a new comprehensive database to track and monitor all allegations. In the interim, we have implemented a file-sharing mechanism to report and store allegations securely and confidentially. We have developed a public information strategy and implementing procedure to guide missions in responding actively and transparently to local media and host populations on sexual exploitation and abuse issues.

The DPKO conduct and discipline teams rely heavily on an ever-growing collaboration in this area with OIOS — the investigating authority for sexual exploitation and abuse offences. OIOS is an essential partner and a central element of our comprehensive strategy with regard to those important issues, which is why DPKO requested OIOS to undertake a global audit on discipline, among many numerous other audits, to help us identify and fix the most difficult problems in the field. We need its help and expertise; we cannot possibly be aware of all potential wrongdoing occurring across the globe, in 18 missions, comprising over 85,000 people drawn from over 100 countries.

The specialized capacity of the OIOS helps ensure thoroughness in the handling and investigation of complaints, and it has established an investigative presence in six missions. But its hand must be

strengthened; currently, OIOS does not have all the resources to do the job that it is being asked to do.

Investigations in the field pose certain problems. While troop-contributing countries have been requested to coordinate with OIOS in a manner that satisfies the requirements of their national jurisdictions, not all Member States are comfortable with the investigative role given to OIOS by the General Assembly, and have reserved their rights with respect to their uniformed personnel on the ground. We must sort through that issue to ensure rapid, reliable means of determining the facts, preserving the rights of the victims and the accused and discharging justice fairly.

Those measures are what we have put in place together with our partners in the United Nations system, and we continue to develop those and other initiatives the areas of prevention and enforcement.

Under the heading of what might be termed remediation, we have made progress with our United Nations partners in developing a policy regarding support to victims. A United Nations-wide task force, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and DPKO, has overseen the preparation of that policy, on which there have been broad consultations over the past year, including several meetings with Members States. It is being transmitted to the Secretary-General this week for final discussions and forwarding to Member States, as requested in the Summit Outcome document.

The measures I have described are the beginning of a programme of systemic and sustained change. We have made significant progress. However, there is a great deal yet to be done and for that, as we will make clear in our discussions in the General Assembly, we need greater support from Member States.

We will urge Member States to adopt a revised memorandum of understanding to incorporate the standards of conduct contained in the Secretary-General's prohibitions. We will urge Member States to firmly endorse the creation of fully fledged conduct and discipline units at Headquarters and in the field, and to establish such units in missions that are not currently served by them. Those units, as I have explained, are an essential tool for preventing misconduct and monitoring compliance with United Nations standards.

We will urge Member States, including all troop-contributing countries, to send an uncompromising message against prostitution in peacekeeping missions. Indeed, today, the single measure that would do the most to reduce the level of allegations and strengthen the policy of zero tolerance against sexual exploitation and abuse is if all troop contingents had an active and effective policy against all prostitution in mission areas.

We will appeal to Member States not to conflate the issues of procurement procedures being stretched by honest peacekeepers trying to get a job done with financial fraud and with sexual exploitation and abuse. It is one thing for auditors — and I happen to be an auditor by training — to disagree about whether financial loss to the Organization has occurred because a field manager chose to use mission aircraft to fly rations to troops when fuel supplies in a country were unexpectedly cut off and left a contractor unable to deliver them; it is another matter altogether when procurement officials deliberately defraud the Organization. But let me stress that, regardless of any divergence of views on methodology and accounting for loss, DPKO takes all OIOS findings and recommendations very seriously and is addressing the weaknesses identified in peacekeeping procurement in the same comprehensive, professional and sustained manner with which we have addressed the sexual exploitation and abuse issue over the past 18 months.

On that point, the Assistant Secretary-General for Mission Support, the Chef de Cabinet, the Head of OIOS, the Under-Secretary-General for Management and I are all fully on board with the Secretary-General's position that we need to be proactive and aggressive in detecting and dealing swiftly with this critical issue. If allegations are proven following due process, dishonest people should be fired and face justice. That is as important here as it is in the case of sex crimes, which constitute a different and most egregious category of offence and demand the highest degree of vigilance.

And finally, we will be seeking formal support from Member States on a longer-term reform agenda for peacekeeping in general, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report now before the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The implementation of those reforms should also help to address some underlying structural

weaknesses that give rise to the acts of misconduct we have been discussing over the past few days.

In conclusion, I want to say that we have tens of thousands of extremely competent, honest and courageous personnel in the field. Those are the nationals — uniformed and civilian personnel alike — of Member States. We cannot allow acts of serious misconduct by some to betray their good work and tarnish the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping. It is an indispensable instrument, it is effective, and it is helping maintain peace for tens of millions of people around the world.

The President: I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein: I am honoured once again to brief the Security Council on this important subject and I am grateful to you, Sir, for having arranged this meeting. I will try, for the most part, not to repeat the points presented to the Council at our last briefing, and so request that my comments be viewed as an update to what was stated here on 31 May 2005.

I believe it is safe for me to conclude that, of all the items on our reform agenda, sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel are the one item we — the Member States, acting with the Secretariat — have been able to treat quietly, without much fuss and with some measure of success.

That assessment may seem out of place, in view of the continued receipt by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of a high number of allegations relating to sexual exploitation and abuse — a matter I will touch on shortly. Nevertheless, I believe it to be the correct assessment.

The Secretariat and the Member States have by and large completed or are about to complete the changes called for by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — the Committee of 34 — following the latter's review of the report submitted by my team, entitled "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations". Members heard from Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno on those achievements this morning.

What remains before us now, in rounding out the work of the last 10 months, is to finalize the revisions to the 1997 model Memorandum of Understanding, to reach an agreement between Member States on the national investigations officer concept — a concept being refined currently by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) — and to receive two rather sophisticated documents: the product of the group of legal experts relating to the de facto impunity enjoyed by some civilian staff members, and the United Nations policy statement and comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims.

When I had the honour of addressing the Committee of 34 on 4 April 2005, I said that I expected the entire reform effort, where sexual exploitation and abuse are concerned, to last two or so years, and I advised then that it would be wise for the Committee to treat the simpler, more practical proposals immediately and to confront those more complex legal, technical issues at a later date, once the preparatory work had been achieved.

We will therefore proceed soon to tackle the second phase of our work. The Committee of 34 will in due course be invited to revisit the recommendation, contained in the comprehensive strategy, that the troop-contributing countries conduct their courts martial in the mission area itself. That topic was not given more than a cursory reading last year and was put aside because some countries said they could not exercise their jurisdiction extraterritorially. Nevertheless, over the last few months, two major troop contributors have in fact completed courts martial in a mission area, and have done so successfully. And, as expected, in rendering justice before the local populations they are there to serve, the troop contributors and the United Nations were able to retain the confidence of those local populations. More Member States need to be encouraged to follow that example, and the Committee of 34 should, through the General Assembly, invite all those countries that are able to conduct courts martial in the mission area to in fact do so. The Committee of 34 should also establish modalities for that purpose.

Turning to individual civilian staff members and the question of impunity for crimes of a sexual nature committed on mission, the difficulty for the United Nations arises whenever grounds for an investigation

into suspected criminal conduct begin to emerge, but neither the host State nor the sending State are in a position to exercise their jurisdiction, either because of circumstances in theatre — that is, when there is no functioning judiciary — or because of legal constraints on the part of the State whose national is under suspicion. The Committee of 34 therefore asked the group of legal experts

> "[t]o provide advice on the best way to proceed so as to ensure that the original intent of the Charter ... can be achieved, namely that United Nations staff and experts on mission would never be effectively exempt from the consequences of criminal acts committed at their duty station, nor unjustly penalized, in accordance with due process" (*A/59/19/Rev.1, part two, para. 40 (a)*).

The group has, as I understand it, a full draft ready before it, requiring only its final review, and once the experts have adopted their text, it will eventually be sent to the Sixth Committee. The Committee of 34 also required the group of legal experts to answer the question as to whether the standards drawn up in the Secretary-General's bulletin could bind contingent members prior to the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding. It also requested the group to propose a way of standardizing norms of conduct applicable to all categories of United Nations personnel. Regrettably, our current experts are unable to assume that undertaking, owing to their other commitments, and a new group of experts will therefore be assembled shortly for that purpose.

The Secretary-General is also about to release a United Nations policy statement and comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims. That document is a thoughtful proposal, prepared carefully over the last nine months by members of the Secretariat, and it will likely contain some bold recommendations. Once that text is presented to the Committee of 34, sometime over the coming days, it will be important for Member States to remain cognizant, in the course of their ensuing discussions and negotiations, of a sense of responsibility towards the victims of United Nations abuse.

As I noted at the outset of this brief presentation, the number of allegations being lodged against United Nations peacekeeping personnel remains high, and unacceptably so. But, as we have made clear to all Member States repeatedly over the last year, that is not entirely unexpected. Until we are able pin down all four corners of our strategy — and, as I said earlier, our work is not yet complete — we should expect at least some allegations. Moreover, with every improvement in the mechanisms designed to facilitate complaints, it is likely we will see occasional spikes in the number of accusations.

Nevertheless, the numbers of allegations currently being registered in some locations still cause us considerable concern. We, the Member States, must therefore, together with all personnel serving in the field, exert even greater efforts in all the missions concerned to drawn those numbers down. We also need to ensure that more resources are provided to OIOS, so that it can carry out its preliminary investigations efficiently, in conjunction with troop contributors. Ultimately, we must continue to view sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations not as some ephemeral issue simply of passing importance, but as the serious issue it in fact is.

I must also acknowledge, however, how hard it is to change a culture of dismissiveness, long developed within ourselves, in our own countries and in the mission areas. We can often legislate a response swiftly when reacting to crises of this sort, but our rate of absorption — absorbing these changes to the point where we can say we have changed our attitudes or a culture — is, as we all know, still problematical. Yet that cannot, of course, be held up as an excuse for the persistent nature of these alleged abuses, because there can, of course, be no excuse for such phenomena.

DPKO, OIOS and OLA have all responded to the challenges imposed on us by sexual exploitation and abuse in a manner deserving of our acknowledgment and gratitude. Despite what I have just noted about current allegations, Member States — and in particular troop-contributing countries — have also been supportive as regards the agreements reached in the General Assembly last year and the implementation thus far of the first phase of our work.

Finally, one cannot — must not — forget that there are peacekeepers, representing all parts of the world, who are dying every year in pursuit of the objectives being established by the Council. They and their surviving colleagues perform a service to the international community of immense worth, a fact that must never be lost in all of this. It is because we know that that it is all the more urgent for us to remove the

blight of sexual exploitation and abuse from what is otherwise distinguished and appreciated performance.

The President: I thank His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein for his briefing.

I invite Council members who wish to take the floor so to indicate to the Secretariat.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to say that I am pleased that the President has taken the initiative to hold this public debate on the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation on the part of peacekeeping forces.

I should first like to reaffirm my country's full support for the steps taken by the Secretary-General to combat those abuses. Those efforts will determine the credibility of the Organization and of the values it enshrines. I also welcome the resolve I noted from the statement made by Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, which, I am pleased to say, illustrates the extent to which his Department is committed to combating sexual abuse and exploitation.

I also wish in particular to thank Prince Zeid for his statement, as well as to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his efforts.

In a report he issued almost one year ago, he proposed a comprehensive strategy aiming at the elimination of sexual abuse and exploitation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. That report provided us with a blueprint to that end and remains our road map. We must follow the course of action it sets out if we wish to end such reprehensible acts that fail to meet the basic duty to provide assistance that every member of a peacekeeping operation has towards the local populations they have been set to protect. Such a policy is crucial to ensuring the full implementation of the goals of the United Nations and, as I have said, to guaranteeing that its values are upheld.

The Security Council has adopted several important resolutions regarding children in armed conflict, women and peace and security and the protection of civilians. The revelation of the existence of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2004 on the part of a significant number of peacekeepers was a serious blow to the Council's efforts and to how peacekeeping missions are perceived. Such behaviour must be resolutely punished. Prince Zeid's report was the first step in establishing a zero-tolerance policy with regard to such actions. For its part, France fully supports a zero-tolerance policy, which we are seeking to put in place at the national level.

It seems to us that we have two goals in combating sexual abuse and exploitation. The first is to protect those who have been the victims of sexual abuse on the part of peacekeepers, while recognizing the responsibility of the United Nations for the behaviour of peacekeepers. Secondly, we should strengthen the administrative disciplinary measures taken by the Organization, as well as judicial prosecution by States against those responsible.

In their briefings, both speakers were quite correct to state that peacekeeping operations are primarily comprised of dedicated, competent and conscientious men and women, and that, while the shortcomings of some should not cast a shadow on peacekeeping missions in general, those shortcomings must nevertheless be punished and a policy of prevention put in place.

Much has been done since the publication of Prince Zeid's report. As both speakers have pointed out, much work remains to be done. We believe that the strategy to be developed must be based on several priorities. First, we must concentrate our efforts on the most serious cases of sexual abuse, namely, those involving paedophilia, rape, violence and human trafficking. Such an approach may entail making a more specific distinction between the various categories of offences.

A second priority should be to expand protection and assistance for those who file complaints. For example, we may wish explicitly to include women in teams investigating complaints. In terms of the assistance to be provided, aid could predominantly take the form of care, rather than financial assistance.

Regarding the financing of such measures, the idea of a voluntary trust fund for victims should be explored.

Finally, with respect to the institution of mechanisms of inquiry — an idea that my delegation fully supports — we must ensure that we articulate and combine effectively procedures for an administrative inquiry, which are up to the Organization, and judicial procedures, which of necessity fall within the purview of States.

In conclusion, I should like to go back to something that Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno said earlier.

If I understood him correctly, he said — and, in any case, this is my firm belief also — that in this matter we require determination on the part of the Secretariat, that there can be no respite in the process; and that there must be a complete commitment on the part of Member States. Those requirements are vital, because we have a collective moral duty to the victims, to safeguard the image of the Organization; and to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, which is at the core of our Organization's mission and is the major task facing the Council.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Before I make my statement, I wish sincerely to thank Mr. Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing. I should like also to thank the Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, Prince Zeid, for his report. Their briefings enabled the Security Council to understand better the situation. We deem it very significant for us to consider this issue.

In recent years, all the parties have deepened their understanding of the positive role played by peacekeeping operations and have also increased their inputs in that respect. At the same time, however, there has been a succession of occurrences of involvement by peacekeeping personnel in sexual exploitation and abuse. That is not only shocking to us but also a disgrace to peacekeeping operations.

Like other members, China is deeply concerned in this respect. If we cannot find an adequate and comprehensive solution to this problem, there is no doubt that it will undermine existing peacekeeping operations and impose serious constraints on the future deployment of new peacekeeping operations.

Last year the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations discussed this issue and put forward a series of corrective measures and proposals that included the investigation and punishment of suspected perpetrators, the revision of the relevant codes of conduct and legal provisions, and the enhancement of pre-deployment training for peacekeeping personnel and of educational campaigns.

China has taken note of the fact that most of those proposals have been implemented and that initial results have been achieved in eliminating and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel.

China resolutely supports the proposals put forward by Prince Zeid, especially as concerns the recommendation that the United Nations formulate and implement a "zero-tolerance" policy for sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations.

The next step should be to focus on prevention and response and to severely punish the perpetrators. At the same time, we need to formulate effective measures with respect to assistance to victims, revise the model memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and troop-contributing countries, and work to improve the entertainment facilities available to peacekeepers.

There is an old Chinese saying that one flaw cannot obscure the splendor of jade. In contrast to all of the efforts and contributions of the entire peacekeeping team, only a small handful of people have engaged in such disgraceful behaviour. China resolutely believes that with joint efforts on the part of the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries and all the parties concerned, this problem will be resolved. China will continue to make positive efforts in that direction.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches great significance to upholding high moral and ethical standards of conduct for all categories of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. This matter deserves ongoing attention by the Organization and its Member States. Today, when peacekeeping activities are increasingly serving as a gauge of the effectiveness of the United Nations in matters of international peace and security, we cannot allow the good reputation of peacekeepers to be sullied by actions of sexual exploitation and abuse. We believe that the United Nations must undertake comprehensive and vigorous actions to combat this scourge.

In that regard, we would like to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Guehenno, and to the Secretariat as a whole for their report today, which, in our view, is indeed of a comprehensive nature.

I should like also to express our appreciation to the Adviser to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, for his contribution to the development of a "zero tolerance" policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. We also welcome the efforts being undertaken in that regard by the General

Assembly and by its Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, and we are prepared to participate actively in that work. We will be interested to see the results of the work of the legal experts on a seldom-studied question: that of eliminating impunity among the civilian personnel of peacekeeping missions.

In our view, critical tasks in terms of eliminating instances of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations would involve the following steps.

The first step would require a harmonization of the existing rules of conduct for peacekeepers and their articulation in a clear and accessible form, so that they could become an important part of the training of peacekeeping personnel.

Secondly, a system should be established for interaction among the Secretariat, the troop-contributing countries and the host States, within their respective competencies. Success in that regard would lie not in redistributing responsibilities among participants in peacekeeping work, but rather in establishing channels for their interaction.

The third step would involve the establishment of a mechanism that is effective and as transparent as possible to ensure accountability with respect to the investigations conducted and the measures taken. We believe that all of those measures must receive in-depth consideration so as to make them effective in the long term.

The Security Council can also play an important role in combating sexual crimes. The role of this body must be first and foremost to draw up the mandates of peacekeeping missions with great care and to establish a reliable political monitoring mechanism for their implementation. Peacekeeping contingents must receive clear instructions as to what actions they are allowed to take, and their preparation and numbers must be in line with their functions. We, too, believe that there is a need to develop a strategy better to organize leisure and recreational activities for the contingents. Nevertheless, we believe that what is even more important is the rational organization of the on-duty time of the peacekeepers. Here it would be good, perhaps, to remind ourselves of the old saying that exists in the military that a soldier's idle mind is the devil's workshop.

Nana Effah Apenteng (Ghana): Let me first express appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno and His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, Permanent Representative of Jordan and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, for their eloquent and comprehensive briefings.

Peacekeeping operations are, undoubtedly, the most tangible testimony of United Nations actions in fulfilling one of its important responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. Having brought succour and hope to the deprived victims of conflict, the distinguished service of the blue helmets over the years has been widely acclaimed. Regrettably, this enviable pedigree has been sullied, albeit partially, by recent dishonourable conduct, in particular, sexual exploitation and abuse, perpetrated by a few misguided and undisciplined individuals.

The overwhelming condemnation of such grave human rights abuses by the international community and the prompt remedial action initiated by the Secretary-General, supported by Member States, has helped to redeem the credibility of the Organization.

My delegation is encouraged by the continuing seriousness with which the United Nations is trying to stem this menace completely, especially the role of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which between 1 January 2004 and 9 December 2005 has investigated 278 alleged sexual exploitation and abuse cases. The creation of the conduct and discipline teams to, among other things, monitor cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and their resolution is another worthwhile initiative. So far, the teams are operating in eight missions. These measures and others are a true reflection of the Organization's avowed determination to ensure the realization of this oft-repeated slogan of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. The relentless efforts by troop-contributing countries towards the attainment of this goal cannot be ignored.

Although we may assume that some progress has been made, an objective assessment of these measures can only be made if data is provided on reported cases prior to their implementation and during the period thereafter. We, therefore, call on the Secretariat to apprise Member States of the requisite statistics to facilitate a thorough review. In any case, it is the expectation of my delegation that any such report will indicate a decrease in such malfeasance. Our optimism is premised on the fact that even an increase in

reported cases could be positively reviewed and attributed to the creation of awareness, which has contributed to the lifting of the veil of silence that has existed up to now.

Again, while welcoming the initial stationing of the teams in eight missions, it is also pertinent to ascertain the factors that informed that decision. We hope that efforts will be made to cover the remaining 10 missions, since undue delay in that regard will be misconstrued and lead to criticism of selectivity.

It is the candid view of my delegation that the quest for a comprehensive solution to the abuses could be enhanced by the provision of welfare and recreational facilities for troops. Having charged this responsibility to troop-contributing countries, it behoves the Secretariat to ensure prompt reimbursement to those participating in peacekeeping operations so as to enable them to pay for the construction of such facilities.

Closely related to sexual exploitation and abuse is the wider issue of women, peace and development and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). In this regard, the effective utilization of available gender expertise would assist tremendously in gaining a better understanding of the societies and people to whom the peace processes are extending needed help. The total implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is, therefore, imperative.

In conclusion, Ghana, as a major troop-contributing country, unreservedly supports measures to eradicate the grave violation of human rights through sexual exploitation and abuse, since the hard-won honour of troop-contributing countries should not be tarnished by the misconduct of a few.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you for having convened this meeting that allows us to continue thinking about a vital question that has to do with the United Nations image. I would also like to thank Mr. Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, whose briefing this morning has shown the importance of the activities undertaken by his Department to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. I would, of course, also like to thank Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, for his briefing, which gives us an update and presents positive developments in the implementation of his report.

We can say, without fear of error, that through peacekeeping operations — the success of which until now has been undeniable, given the growing number of countries that have managed to extricate themselves from conflict situations — that the Security Council presents a positive image of its action in terms of peacekeeping. Well aware of the importance of this fact, leaders from around the world emphasized, during the September summit, that peacekeeping is at the heart of United Nations activities and that the Organization needs to be up to the task of meeting the challenges in this area. They also expressed their concern with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse. That latter point, which is the subject of today's debate, is sufficiently important that the duty to become more aware of such deviant behaviours and to provide assistance to those who are vulnerable has led us to greater cohesiveness in the various United Nations bodies.

If any good can come from this, it will come from determining, not which organ has done the best job, but rather how we, together, can contribute to curbing this evil. How can we not act collectively, given these arguably ignominious actions?

In his report, Prince Zeid said,

> "prostitution and other sexual exploitation in a peacekeeping context is profoundly disturbing to many because the United Nations has been mandated to enter into a broken society to help it, not to breach the trust placed in it by the local population. Moreover, the Organization should not in any way increase the suffering of vulnerable sectors of the population, which has often been devastated by war or civil conflict". (*A/59/710, para. 6*)

The example of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the most often cited one today, shows to what extent these actions sometimes begin to look like really villainous crimes. Young girls have been raped and then put in a dependency situation for a handful of cash or a little bit of food, and then they are pushed further back into prostitution and degradation.

My delegation believes that deviant behaviour in peacekeeping operations, which, by the way, is not something recent and the current scope of which can only cause more shock and indignation, is unjustifiable. Exploitation and sexual abuse, the subject of our debate today, are contrary to the ideal of

peacekeeping operations, as many delegations have indicated. That ideal is to save human lives and attenuate the suffering of people in countries undergoing conflict.

We must, therefore, be firmer in our approach to extract peacekeeping operations from this difficult and shameful situation, because silence exposes them to public opprobrium and their essential goal is to save lives, not to destroy them. I would, therefore, like to salute the efforts undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the troop-contributing countries in implementation of the Brahimi report to remedy these situations.

The recommendations set out in Prince Zeid's report — whose implementation by DPKO is well under way — give us an effective framework, as they provide a comprehensive solution to a problem that is a challenge. We therefore urge the continuation of these efforts, including the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy and a zero-complacency policy, referred to by the Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet yesterday. Such a commitment would honour our institution.

In my delegation's view, the zero-tolerance policy requires practical measures involving Member States, troop-contributing countries and the populations concerned. We support the regulatory provisions already adopted or now being elaborated on codes of conduct and behaviour. In that regard, we see as positive the incorporation of provisions contained in the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) into legal agreements related to experts on mission and into past agreements with troop-contributing countries.

However, adopting measures is one thing, implementing them is another. The role of training becomes readily apparent here. And we are pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report (A/60/640/Add.1) indicates that provisions are in the process of being implemented or formulated to compensate for certain shortcomings. We also note with interest the circulation to Member States since October 2005 of the generic training module, whose first part is devoted to sexual exploitation and abuse.

In his recommendations, Prince Zeid says, quite rightly, that the guilty silence must be broken. That is why we insist on the following. The concerned populations, who must be aware of their rights — including the right to file complaints regarding abuse that they have experienced — must be trained and educated. In that regard, peacekeeping missions must implement the Department's directives and must be accountable. The civilian and military hierarchies of the various contingents must be trained and educated to ensure that sexual exploitation and abuse are not covered up or tolerated. These hierarchies — which themselves are not above suspicion — must be able to implement and ensure compliance with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy. Oversight mechanisms must be instituted, including within these hierarchies, to break the silence at all levels. The role of the Department itself with respect to the collection and management of data on the management of disciplinary procedures and the adjustment of policies could go as far as establishing an early warning system.

Zero complacency means finding the guilty, identifying them and applying the appropriate punishment. All modern means must be used for that purpose. The so-called peacekeeping babies must not remain fatherless. It would also be highly desirable if all those involved in peacekeeping operations voluntarily agreed to submit to state-of-the-art identity testing. Thus, evidence of rape would be easily identifiable, and unaware fathers could be traced.

In that connection, legal agreements with troop-contributing countries must be sufficiently explicit. A mechanism must be found to ensure that the guilty are truly punished in their countries of origin. We must also plan a mechanism enabling victims to seek justice, which is not always obvious in certain cases in which the individuals concerned might be illiterate. When individuals cannot act on their own because of ignorance or fear of reprisal, a specific mechanism should be set up.

I cannot conclude without paying a well-deserved tribute to all those men and women who have sacrificed their lives in the service of peace. Fortunately, among the men and women who serve peace, there are honest people whose merit cannot be overshadowed by the guilty behaviour of undisciplined elements. These honest men and women, who constitute the great majority, deserve our recognition and respect. Without their commitment, our action in the service of peace could not be carried out.

My delegation reaffirms its firm support for peacekeeping operations, which — for Africa in

particular — are a tool of international cooperation in situations of armed crisis.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I would like to join others in underlining the importance of the issue we are discussing today. Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse must be taken extremely seriously. They are directly relevant to the conduct of operations authorized by the Security Council, and they undermine the essential work being carried out in peacebuilding areas. They also affect the wider image and credibility of the United Nations. I believe that they demonstrate why we have what others have described as an obligation — a moral imperative — to pursue these issues vigorously in all the relevant organs of the United Nations system and to tackle all aspects of the problem through comprehensive policies, including, crucially, the provision of support to victims.

The United Kingdom fully supports the statement to be made later this morning by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to begin by recognizing the vital role that United Nations peacekeeping operations have played for decades in bringing peace and stability to countries emerging from war. The United Kingdom further recognizes that the large majority of the women and men who serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations do so with the utmost professionalism and dedication and in some cases, sadly, make the ultimate sacrifice.

The United Kingdom shares the deep concern over the allegations of sexual misconduct by United Nations peacekeeping personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2004 and 2005. We condemn, in the strongest terms, all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by whomsoever and wherever they are committed. So we strongly support the action of the Secretary-General to implement his zero-tolerance approach in all United Nations missions.

It follows that we welcome the comprehensive report (A/59/710) on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, which contained detailed recommendations on tackling this issue and reiterated the importance of urgent action on sexual exploitation and abuse. I want to pay particular tribute to Ambassador Zeid for his continuing and dedicated work. We must all work together to see that the recommendations of his report are fully and properly implemented. The test will be whether real progress is made on the ground as well as in committee.

From listening to the Under-Secretary-General, it is clear that progress is being made. That fact owes a great deal to his personal leadership in addressing openly this acute problem and in trying to make sure that comprehensive policies are put in place to tackle all aspects of sexual exploitation and abuse. We particularly welcome the fact that uniform standards have now been implemented for all civilian and uniformed personnel contracted by the United Nations. We also welcome the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to finalize the draft model memorandum of understanding, and we hope that the General Assembly can adopt it before the end of its sixtieth session.

Furthermore, we welcome the progress that has been made in the area of training and, in particular, in the mandatory sexual exploitation and abuse module that has now been introduced, as well as progress on welfare and recreation, which is an essential element of making sure that troops actually behave themselves in theatre.

But while there has been some progress in tackling some progress in tackling this difficult and sensitive issue, sexual exploitation and abuse remains a significant problem in many missions. Both DPKO and troop-contributing countries need to do much more to implement the decisions taken at the 2005 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to enforce the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy.

Let me be clear: it is a shared responsibility of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretariat, the Special Representative — whoever he or she may be — in theatre and, crucially, the troop-contributing countries to ensure that we tackle and eradicate this problem. If we fail to do so, we will do nothing less than risk the success of missions and jeopardize United Nations peacekeeping in general.

It is also the case that the widespread mainstreaming of gender into all policies and programmes at the national and international levels is also a crucial factor in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. We must therefore do justice to resolution 1325 (2000), ensuring that women are full and equal participants in peace processes and, through that, that we help better to create sustainable peace. For

its part, the United Kingdom has, since the publication of the comprehensive report (A/59/710), worked with the Secretariat and major troop-contributing countries, as appropriate, to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented.

The United Kingdom is systematically looking for opportunities to ensure that language against sexual exploitation and abuse is included in Security Council resolutions, in peacekeeping mandates and in reports at both the United Nations and other international organizations. For our part, the Ministry of Defence in London provides training on gender, child-protection and human rights issues to all United Kingdom military personnel embarking on peacekeeping or similar overseas missions. I recommend that to colleagues as a necessary step as part of information-sharing and putting responsibility where it properly belongs. Nationally, of course, we also take action in those cases where members of our military contingents are alleged to have been involved in any misbehaviour; the test is how those cases are then followed up and tackled.

In addition to the support already provided to the Secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), we aim, at the next session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, to encourage other member States to support the establishment of conduct and discipline units as a full-time dedicated capacity. This would ensure that work undertaken by those units has a long-lasting impact on the situation. We also encourage Special Committee endorsement of the participation of troop-contributing countries in investigations to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in a national criminal court. We look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's comprehensive strategy for assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Let me conclude by once again condemning all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and underlining the resolve of the United Kingdom to see the issues tackled and the problem of sexual misconduct eliminated in all its forms. I hope that today's discussion will stiffen the common resolve of the organs of the United Nations, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries to rid United Nations peacekeeping missions of this scourge. But we should be conscious that, as the Under-Secretary-General said, we are only at the beginning of a programme of systemic and sustained change. A great deal more is therefore yet to be done. We have a moral responsibility to do what is needed to accomplish that.

Mrs. Papadopoulou (Greece): I too would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing today and to express our appreciation to Prince Zeid for his tireless work to address and resolve an issue which is obviously of great concern to all of us — an issue which has an undeniable impact on the credibility and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping efforts as a whole.

Greece associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the Austrian presidency of the European Union.

Peacekeeping operations constitute the most effective and successful means to deal with situations that constitute a threat to international peace and security. And, in that respect, all personnel involved in those operations play an invaluable role, working under extremely difficult circumstances and even putting their lives at risk. They are doing a truly remarkable job, and they deserve our respect and our deep gratitude.

It is unfortunate, though, that the unacceptable behaviour of certain individuals within peacekeeping operations threatens to tarnish the very name and image which allow the United Nations to work so effectively in war-torn countries and to bring peace and stability to millions around the world. Only by holding itself to the highest standards of ethical conduct can the United Nations preserve the credibility and moral authority necessary to carry out its mission in societies already vulnerable and deeply wounded by the turmoil and brutality of war.

Greece condemns in the strongest terms all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, military and civilian, and reiterates once again its strong support for the United Nations zero-tolerance policy in such cases.

In this regard, the United Nations should undertake every effort to further identify patterns of abuse, record and report incidents and ensure that justice is served. The misconduct of the few should not undercut the contributions of the many. However, only once accountable and transparent response strategies are in place to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and to protect local populations from it will the United

Nations send a message that it does not tolerate or condone such behaviour.

We would like to underline the importance of bolstering the highest standards of discipline and conduct befitting a United Nations peacekeeping operation. Training programmes for new peacekeeping personnel — including training in international humanitarian law, human rights law and children's rights law, with specific reference to the protection of children and women — must make clear that the zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse will be fully enforced. Additionally, in order to implement these standards, we must create a culture that rejects and penalizes such abhorrent behaviour at every level, from the senior civilian and military leadership down to the level of individual peacekeepers.

Close cooperation between troop-contributing countries and the Office of Internal Oversight Services in the conduct of investigations is crucial in the fight against impunity in order to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in the relevant national jurisdiction. It is also extremely important that managers and commanders be made responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, that they be clearly directed to facilitate investigations and that they be held accountable for their failures in this regard. Furthermore, it is indispensable that there be no impunity for any individuals participating in peacekeeping missions who have committed a criminal offence, including United Nations staff and experts on mission, bearing in mind the principle that the same norms of conduct must apply to all categories of peacekeeping personnel.

We believe that the revised draft model memorandum of understanding to be adopted by the General Assembly as a basis for negotiation with troop-contributing countries will be invaluable for ensuring that troop-contributing Governments are fully aware of, and can be held to account for, their responsibilities in this area.

The United Nations must ensure, as part of its overall efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse by its staff and related personnel, that complainants and victims have access to timely, effective and compassionate support, including medical, psychological and legal services. All complainants and victims are to be treated with humanity and respect for their dignity and human rights. To ensure that all new policies are widely acknowledged, understood, adhered to and enforced, unified guidelines applicable to all United Nations peacekeeping personnel should be developed and implemented.

It is unacceptable that anyone connected with a United Nations peacekeeping mission — the very people the world entrusts with the task of protecting civilians from harm — should prey on the very women and children seeking their help. The problem, though, cannot be fixed overnight and needs to be addressed on a long-term basis. All of us — the Secretariat and the Member States — need to show commitment and determination and take the necessary measures to deal with it, both in our immediate response to such cases when they occur and in formulating a comprehensive strategy to combat and eradicate the phenomenon.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I would like first of all to join other colleagues in thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Prince Zeid, Permanent Representative of Jordan and Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, for their valuable briefings. We commend them for their leadership and for their tireless efforts in addressing problems of sexual exploitation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Important observations presented today by Prince Zeid and Mr. Guéhenno confirm that sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations is a serious problem that can damage the reputation and credibility of the United Nations and its operations and that can jeopardize the fulfilment of the mandates of such operations. We agree that the urgent and constant attention and determined action of all relevant United Nations bodies is needed to effectively address the problem in all its complexity. We therefore welcome this initiative of the presidency, which offers us an opportunity to discuss the topic today. We fully align ourselves with the statement to be made later by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore limit my statement to just a few comments.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that Slovakia strongly denounces all forms of sexual misconduct committed by peacekeepers. We consider it inexcusable that peacekeepers, who are mandated to protect civilians against human rights violations and

abuse, should be involved in acts that they are supposed to help eradicate.

In this context, we fully support the recommendations contained in the comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, elaborated by Prince Zeid (see A/59/710). We also welcome the priority attention that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has been paying to the area of sexual exploitation and abuse. The efforts of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and DPKO, in particular those of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, have had positive results. However, we agree that much remains to be done in that area. The full realization of the zero-tolerance principle in the field remains a challenge, and is an important priority.

We consider the preparation of a comprehensive United Nations policy on support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to be an endeavour of paramount importance. Its accelerated implementation in the field will be indispensable for achieving significant progress in addressing this negative phenomenon. The creation of conduct and discipline units in peacekeeping operations is another important step in the right direction. We appreciate the positive achievements in the preparation of the investigation module. However, much remains to be done to make investigations of military or civilian personnel in the field fully functional.

Slovakia fully supports the incorporation of national investigative officers and courts martial into the investigation processes. We are of the opinion — indeed, we are convinced — that that step will increase the number of sexual exploitation and abuse investigations that are concluded and prosecuted. Issues such as the legal authority of the OIOS investigative team, differences in investigative methods and national rules and transparency are challenges that need to be addressed appropriately. In that regard, we look forward to the report of the legal experts, which will be sent to the Sixth Committee soon, as Prince Zeid informed us.

We certainly all agree that prevention is the best tool for avoiding crime or misconduct. That is also true of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. In that context, we are of the opinion that all peacekeepers — military, police or civilian — must undergo appropriate training on conduct. That concerns in particular managers and commanders, who should be very mindful of misconduct and aware of their own responsibilities in the matter.

It would be naive to expect sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations missions to be tackled overnight. It should be our firm commitment to persist and consistently promote the principle of zero tolerance and zero impunity for misconduct. The briefings and discussions today demonstrate the determination of the Secretariat and Member countries to address the problem with renewed vigour. We are convinced that the more attention we pay to these problems, the sooner we will succeed in eliminating cases of sexual exploitation and abuse from United Nations peacekeeping operations. That must be our common goal and priority.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to hold a public meeting of the Security Council on this very serious matter affecting the Organization. I would also like to express appreciation to Mr. Guehenno for the efforts the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is making to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. My thanks go also to Prince Zeid for his briefing updating us on efforts to eradicate those crimes since 31 May 2005.

We believe it very appropriate that the Security Council should take up the subject of sexual exploitation and abuse. Such crimes are a perversion of the spirit and letter of the Charter. They are crimes that cut to the humanist heart of the Organization — the defence of human rights. Ultimately, they undermine the legitimacy of peacekeeping operations and the international community's confidence in the functioning of our multilateral system for peace.

As has been said, we, the Member States, must have zero tolerance for cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. In order to do away with such crimes, we must implement preventive measures and apply exemplary punishment through due process. We therefore welcome the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to prevent the entrenchment within the United Nations of what was called a few days ago a culture of inaction, which could lead to a culture of impunity.

With regard to preventive measures, my delegation supports the annexing to memorandums of understanding — the agreements that govern the participation of Member States in peacekeeping operations — a code of conduct that personnel must observe. Such a code of conduct will enable States — Governments, which have responsibility in this area — to have full prior knowledge of the ethical and legal commitments required of their troops taking part in a peacekeeping operation. Furthermore, the training process should be intensified with a view to ensuring, if possible, that every single peacekeeper is trained. Information and training should also be provided to multilateral forces authorized by the United Nations with regard to the Geneva Conventions, the Convention against Torture and other relevant human rights instruments.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/60/640 and Add.1), between January 2004 and October 2005 investigations were carried out into accusations of acts of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by 264 peacekeeping personnel. However, more up-to-date figures indicate that there may be as many as 400 accusations. That means that, over the past two years, approximately 25 per cent of the accusations made have not been investigated. That may be the result of a lack of sufficient human and financial resources to carry out the investigations.

Another aspect of sexual exploitation and abuse is the reluctance of the victims themselves to denounce such criminal acts — reluctance that might be due to ignorance or, perhaps, to their reverential feelings towards international authorities.

One system that could prove helpful would be the establishment of some sort of office of ombudsman for peacekeeping operations that would work in the field and report directly to Member States on acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the ombudsman would ensure that factual information could be obtained directly in the field, allowing the victim and the defendant to provide their own version of the incident. Such a practice would allow for greater due process in the investigation and sanctions system.

In his report, the Secretary-General states that, in the second half of this year, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will establish a general database to track such crimes. In that regard, we believe that the database should be even broader than that described in the report. It should not only identify the accused, but provide information on the accusers, as well as on allegations under investigation and the reasons why other allegations have not been investigated.

It is said that the United Nations sends its peacekeeping forces to do work that no one else wants to do. Now we are faced with an aberration, whereby wicked elements in peacekeeping operations do what no one wants them to do — that is, perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse. I conclude by stressing that, in response to the crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse, Member States must cooperate and initiate a policy of zero tolerance. Disciplinary bodies must be created so that the United Nations does not lose its legitimacy in world public opinion.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Let me first of all emphasize that I find it most appropriate that the Council should take stock of this important issue on a regular basis.

The last time we had sexual exploitation and abuse on our agenda was during the Danish presidency in May last year. Today, as in May, we have received updates from Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Ambassador Zeid. I would like to thank both of them for their very useful briefings, their views on the present status of implementation and their thoughts on how to move forward from here.

Denmark fully supports the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping forces and other staff members of the United Nations is one that we would all have preferred to do without. It is completely unacceptable by all moral and ethical standards, it undermines the reputation of the United Nations, and it has devastating consequences for the victims. Therefore, Denmark is pleased that the United Nations has taken a number of important steps to fight sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security of October 2005 included a United Nations system-wide action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We warmly welcome the fact that one of the key areas of action

was response to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff, related personnel and partners. In order to secure an effective follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000), we — the United Nations and its Member States — need to demonstrate firm action and prosecute the perpetrators who violate not only our trust, but the trust of those they were sent to help and protect. The policy of zero tolerance has to be implemented.

Denmark has already initiated a national study on how to protect women and girls against, for example, sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the planning and completion of international operations. The study will, among other things, ensure that the protection of women and girls is reflected in all the basic documents of any given operation and in the education of the Danish armed forces.

It is of the utmost importance that a policy of zero tolerance go hand in hand with the implementation of awareness and accountability programmes. Awareness-raising programmes should focus on pre-mission training, training upon arrival in the mission area, and training and awareness throughout the deployment. Programmes on accountability should target not only the individual soldiers or staff, but also the management. All levels of staff must realize that sexual exploitation and abuse will not be tolerated and that misbehaviour will be penalized.

If we succeed in that field and manage to change the culture, the perception and the mentality to a point at which sexual exploitation and abuse are no longer accepted or tolerated at any level in the Organization, there will be no need for investigation teams, no need for victim assistance programmes and no more embarrassing news about misbehaved United Nations peacekeepers. That will happen only in a perfect world, I admit. We are not there yet, but let us together try to get as close as possible.

Allow me, in that connection, to mention that Denmark has agreed to sponsor a train-the-trainer workshop in Italy, organized by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) under the rubric "Capacity-building on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations".

Denmark also supports the ongoing work in the Working Group of the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations, where a number of recommendations proposed by, among others, Prince Zeid and DPKO will be further discussed. Several of those recommendations seem from the outset to be straightforward, logical and obvious. We are, however, well aware that in the attempt to implement the various initiatives, many complex legal aspects have surfaced. Legal obstacles, however, should not prevent us from continuously striving to make progress. The fight against sexual exploitation and abuse must continue. Let me at this stage urge all troop- and police-contributing countries to cooperate actively with DPKO on that issue.

Likewise, I expect that the Secretariat shall not hesitate to return to the Council and ask for further guidance, if need be.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): First, I thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ambassador Zeid for their detailed briefings.

My delegation acknowledges with appreciation the fact that, since the serious problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers came to light, considerable efforts have been made over the past months by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the missions deployed in the field and troop-contributing Governments to address the issue and take the necessary preventive and remedial measures. We strongly support the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary-General in striving to stamp out that inexcusable misconduct in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We particularly appreciated the highly valuable report submitted, along with recommendations, last March by the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, Prince Zeid, on this issue. I wish to take this opportunity to pay a high tribute to the great efforts and contributions that the Ambassador of Jordan continues to make on that matter. Subsequent to that report, Member States and the Secretariat worked together in the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and adopted a comprehensive report providing for preventive measures to be implemented in all peacekeeping missions, including appropriate punishment for all violators of the rules.

Those are commendable efforts, but what is clearly most important is the implementation of the measures by all parties concerned, including DPKO

and troop-contributing countries. The briefings provided this morning have made it clear that, while much improvement has been recorded in the field and at the Headquarters level to implement some of those recommendations — and we must acknowledge and appreciate the accomplishments that have been made — the full truth is that much remains to be done. There is no room for any complacency in that regard.

As part of the follow-up to implementation, the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, which I have the honour to chair, last year took up the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation, with special attention devoted to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). The Working Group held a joint meeting with major troop-contributing countries, to which the Chairman of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Ambassador Wali of Nigeria, was also invited. That invitation to the Chairman of the Committee of 34, which he accepted, was intended to develop better coordination and a complementary working relationship between the subsidiary body of the Security Council and the General Assembly in the handling of DPKO issues.

That meeting included an update by DPKO and troop-contributing countries regarding how the measures to prevent cases of sexual abuse and exploitation in MONUC were being implemented. There was an active exchange of views at the meeting about how those measures should be improved further. I felt that it was a useful exercise. The Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operation stands ready to be proactive in providing impetus, as necessary, to the implementation of preventive and remedial measures.

The international community expects high standards of responsibility and discipline on the part of troops and staff deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Every peacekeeper deployed and every troop-, police- and civilian-contributing country is expected to maintain high moral, ethical and professional standards while serving under the flag of the United Nations. In most situations they have lived up to those high expectations, and they deserve praise for their dedication and hard work — which they frequently carry out in difficult circumstances, in the course of which the ultimate sacrifice has sometimes been required.

Unfortunately, however, the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping operations has been tarnished by serious allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation due to the misbehaviour of some. Again, the issue of improper procurement practices and allegations of fraud and mismanagement in procurement services related to peacekeeping operations have come to undermine the credibility of peacekeeping operations. I do not envy Jean-Marie Guéhenno his position in the last few days. However, we must spare no effort in correcting the wrongs and overcoming the weaknesses in the system, thereby restoring the good name of United Nations peacekeeping operations by taking all the necessary measures with the same rigour and in a spirit of zero-tolerance. Nothing less will be acceptable to Member States.

I would like to conclude by stating that DPKO has the full support of my delegation in its further efforts.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to commend and thank the President for the holding this public meeting. We believe that discussing the issue that was the subject of debate at a meeting yesterday and the matter under consideration today should indeed take place in public, in order that the entire world may be aware of what occurs at the United Nations. In other words, we should ensure that we truly apply transparency to the work of the Security Council, which is something we often talk about but rarely want to do.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the briefings given by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel. Their presentations were both clear and detailed as regards the matter under consideration.

Argentina has always condemned cases of sexual abuse and exploitation, which bring discredit and dishonour upon the laudable goals of peacekeeping operations. The international community must be resolute in repudiating sexual abuse and exploitation, while at the same time continuing to support peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts in countries suffering from conflict. We therefore believe that, bearing in mind the complex environment in which peacekeeping operations take place, the United Nations

must put in place consistent and specific controls aimed at preventing and punishing cases of sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as ensuring that no allegation goes uninvestigated.

Our country resolutely follows, and will continue to adhere to, the timely zero-tolerance policy launched by the Secretary-General. That policy should enjoy the necessary reach and be promoted widely throughout national and regional training centres for Blue Helmets.

In that connection, we would particularly like to emphasize the usefulness of the report prepared by Prince Zeid, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations. We would like to thank him for the interest and dedication he has devoted to this matter. As was the case with his report last year, this year's report will make an extremely important contribution to the deliberations of the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations. We recall that the Committee has developed a series of recommendations to enable the Secretariat to address this problem. We are pleased to note that many of those recommendations have already been put in practice.

We believe that there must be a comprehensive approach to address this issue. That approach must involve every agency on the ground. As we know, agency personnel have, unfortunately, in some cases also been responsible for committing these abuses. Moreover, the system's response must also be comprehensive and exhaustive.

With regard to rules and regulations, it is important to standardize criteria and clearly disseminate the standards of conduct expected of Blue Helmets. In that connection, it seems to us that combining three texts into a unified whole is a good step on the part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Every effort must be made to translate that text into all official languages and the majority of languages represented by troop-contributing countries. Doing so would contribute to greater dissemination and understanding of the desired objectives.

Similarly, we think that the proposal to modify the text of the 1997 memorandum of understanding of is a welcome initiative, whose goal is to better define the type of behaviour expected of contingents, as well as the specific responsibilities of troop-contributing countries.

It is important to implement measures that emphasize existing responsibilities in the areas of organization, management and command, as well as to improve access to recreational activities for troops.

With regard to punishing abuse, it seems to us essential for there to be clear terms of reference for the carrying out of investigations. It is also necessary that the basic principles of due process be respected at all times. Troop-contributing countries must be responsible in their action so that proven crimes do not go unpunished.

Lastly, in saying that there must be a comprehensive approach to dealing with this matter, we mean that there must also be a speedy and effective strategy to provide assistance to victims. That must include access to reproductive health services, psychological care, counselling, administrative and legal support and, as appropriate, financial compensation.

We believe that, in the context of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the General Assembly has a crucial role to play in the debate on this issue and in the taking of decisions on the matter. We hope that the Organization, through the General Assembly, will be able to take the urgent action that this problem requires and that we will see a gradual reduction in the recurrence of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, since the latter cast a shadow of suspicion on the vital contribution of peacekeeping operations to international coexistence.

There is no doubt that that the majority of men and women who serve in such operations do so with great altruism, professionalism and courage, even, on occasion, sacrificing their lives in the cause of peace. For their sake, and to honour the memory of all those who have fallen in the line of duty, we must resolutely condemn and put an end to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Qatar, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: First of all, I should like, on behalf of Qatar, to thank the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, for their briefings.

Qatar attaches great importance to this matter and to the serious accusations of breaches of conduct and acts of sexual violence on the part of peacekeeping contingents. We vigorously condemn such actions, which are shameful, unjustifiable and unacceptable, especially given that they target vulnerable persons — the very persons we are supposed to be protecting.

Secondly, such actions sully the reputation of peacekeeping operations, which are vital, as well as that of the Organization — a very serious matter indeed. We must study all of the various aspects of this phenomenon and consult with the troop-contributing countries so that we can put an end to all such violations and breaches of conduct.

We must do so with the appropriate resources and within the general framework of the United Nations. We need to conduct investigations and adduce evidence in cases of sexual exploitation, and impose the appropriate sanctions. The participation and cooperation of the troop-contributing countries is, of course, pivotal to the success of this undertaking.

When a peacekeeping operation is established by the Council, instructions and training must be given to its personnel, and the gravity of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse must be made clear. We must sensitize contingents to United Nations standards in this area. We need also to draw on Prince Zeid's report as well as on the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations with respect to cases of sexual abuse and to establish ethical-conduct teams within the United Nations. We should also create a climate and a culture on the ground that does not tolerate this type of abuse.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to those who have fallen during peacekeeping operations for having fulfilled their mission — those faithful soldiers of the United Nations. We must not allow a few incidents to cast a shadow on the lofty peacekeeping mission of the United Nations.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish at the outset to thank Mr. Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his latest report on sexual exploitation and abuse. We thank also His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, for his briefing on the issue as a follow-up to his previous report to the Council in May last year.

It is logical for the Security Council, as a body that defines and authorizes peacekeeping missions, to be seized of issues that hamper the operations of such missions. Sexual exploitation and abuse is one of those cross-cutting issues which demand a cross-mandated coordinated response.

We therefore align ourselves with the statement of the African Union, to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone.

We acknowledge the good work undertaken by peacekeeping personnel, but we are concerned that the unethical behaviour of some personnel is tarnishing the image and reputation of peacekeeping operations and that of the United Nations as whole. Sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel represent a breach of trust vis-a-vis the local population and host Governments, which the peacekeepers are sent to protect and serve. The issues at stake involve not only a breach of trust with respect to the hosts but also the reputation of troop-contributing countries.

The report, entitled "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations", by the Adviser to the Secretary-General, His Highness Prince Zeid, discusses this issue in depth and offers very good recommendations. The challenge we now face is to put an end to such acts and then prevent them from happening again. In that regard, we welcome the various measures that are being taken and urge their mainstreaming in the management culture of the United Nations, in training modules and in the professional code of conduct for the United Nations and troop-contributing countries.

As we take measures to end sexual exploitation and abuse by our peacekeeping personnel, we need also to understand the underlying factors that make communities vulnerable to such exploitation and abuse in conflict areas. The demeaning nature of poverty and deprivation must be addressed concurrently as peace operations continue. We believe that this is one of the areas that the Peacebuilding Commission should address when it becomes operational.

We must also understand the psychological and social impact of conflict on affected societies which

are exploited by deviant elements and make an effort also to understand the cultural and national sensitivities of receiving Governments and communities as we prepare peacekeeping mandates. Each peacekeeping mission has its own unique characteristics, which should be understood and respected. Sensitization programmes for peacekeepers ought to be integral and continuous components in integrated peacekeeping missions.

While we appreciate the difficulties involved in investigating allegations of sexual misconduct, we wish to urge all that such allegations continue to be duly investigated and reported. More work is needed to synchronize the United Nations ethics and administration guidelines with the judicial systems of host countries and troop-contributing countries.

In that regard, we wish to reiterate the importance of increasing the percentage of women in peacekeeping operations to facilitate awareness campaigns and confidence-building among vulnerable groups. We need also to remind ourselves of our obligation to increase the role of women in conflict management and resolution, as per resolution 1325 (2000).

Finally, let me reiterate my Government's strong condemnation of all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and its support for the Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

There should also be a "zero complacency" and a "zero impunity" approach to this issue, to borrow phrases that were used in Mr. Mark Malloch Brown's presentation yesterday on the related issue of procurement fraud in peacekeeping operations.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I would like to thank both the Secretariat and Prince Zeid for their briefings today on this matter. In particular, I would like to commend Prince Zeid for the important work he has done as the Secretary-General's Special Adviser to shine light on what is arguably one of the greatest stains on United Nations history. It is absolutely unacceptable that horrific crimes of sexual abuse and exploitation have been committed by United Nations peacekeepers against individuals they have been assigned to protect.

Having an open briefing on this subject is important because, while we rightly express our moral outrage, we must take firm and decisive action. We must take action now, not only to pursue justice and a resolution to the crimes that have already been committed, but also to establish the necessary institutions, mechanisms, training and oversight procedures to ensure they are not repeated in existing and future peacekeeping operations. We cannot wait months and years while more children are exploited and the reputation of United Nations peacekeepers continues to decline.

Failure to act on this matter will have profound implications for both existing and future peacekeeping missions. As we begin to plan our next operation in Darfur, we do not want to contemplate potential headlines of United Nations peacekeepers in Darfur raping the very population that they are entrusted to protect. We concur in full with Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno when he remarked last May that,

> "Indeed, it is precisely our image and reputation that gives us the credibility to work so effectively in war-torn countries and bring peace and stability to millions across the world. Eliminating such misconduct is therefore integral to the success of peacekeeping". (*S/PV.5191, p. 5*)

Throughout our wide-ranging discussions on a variety of issues related to United Nations reform, we have spoken of the need for a fundamental change in the culture and the way the United Nations operates. We have heard Paul Volcker, Chairman of the Commission investigating the oil-for-food scandal, speak of a culture of inaction. Just yesterday, we discussed the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) report on Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) procurement, where OIOS spoke of a culture of impunity.

Resolution and prevention of future acts of sexual exploitation and abuse call for the same fundamental shift. We are pleased that the Secretariat acknowledges this point, with Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno remarking that,

> "We need to create a culture and environment in peacekeeping operations that does not permit sexual exploitation and abuse. This requires joint action by both DPKO and Member States". (ibid, p. 7)

The United States, for its part, takes its responsibility as a Member State seriously in this regard. We are working closely with others to finalize language in the

new, amended Memorandum of Understanding issued by DPKO last fall and encourage other troop-contributing countries to do so as well.

The United States Congress has expressed keen interest in this matter and has taken action. In 2005, Congress passed and President Bush signed the 2005 re-authorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. This new legislation requires the Executive Branch, starting in June 2006, to report annually to the United States Congress on the actions taken by the United Nations and other international organizations to prevent trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse by employees, contractors and peacekeeping forces. It also requires the Secretary of State to report to the United States Congress on the effectiveness of those actions prior to voting on any new or re-authorized peacekeeping mission.

The United States Government has also taken action on an important matter closely linked to the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers, namely, the spread of HIV. We have fully supported, and will continue to support, Security Council resolution 1308 (2000). The United States Department of Defense, and more recently the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, have provided resources and technical assistance to implement long-term strategies for HIV/AIDS education, prevention, counselling, testing and treatment in more than 70 military and peacekeeping populations around the world. Since the adoption of resolution 1308 (2000), the United States has assisted with the HIV/AIDS education of over two million uniformed personnel, trained 7,000 uniformed peer educators, established more than 200 HIV/AIDS counselling and testing facilities on or near military bases, provided HIV/AIDS diagnostic and screening equipment to 30 armed forces and trained over 600 uniformed medical personnel in the care and treatment of HIV-infected personnel and their families.

We strongly endorse the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping to strengthen enforcement of a uniform United Nations code of conduct for peacekeepers, improve the capacity of the United Nations, in cooperation with troop-contributing countries, to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, establish assistance to and compensation for victims and enhance pre- and post-deployment training for United Nations peacekeepers. We also welcome the creation of personal conduct units within the United Nations missions in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Sudan to address allegations and assist victims. We feel it is critical that all United Nations missions include similar units in each of their respective fields. We will strongly encourage other United Nations Security Council members to continue to support the inclusion in United Nations Security Council resolutions establishing peacekeeping operations specific and strong language to that end. Finally, we take special note of DPKO efforts to increase the participation of female uniformed personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We are concerned, however, about the status and progress of the investigations into past cases of abuse. We understand that the Office of Internal Oversight Services took over all investigations as of last October and is expected to issue a report this May. We expect that DPKO will cooperate fully with OIOS in its investigations of past abuses and in providing access to all information on new allegations as they surface. We know this is a daunting task and that OIOS has only begun to scratch the surface of this problem. To date, the United Nations has investigated 295 cases, resulting in 137 repatriations and 16 dismissals of soldiers, commanders, police and United Nations staff. It is also critical that OIOS operate with complete autonomy to investigate these matters. This will help all parts of the Organization by insulating it from accusations of trying to cover up the scope and magnitude of the problem.

I note that OIOS is absent today, as it was absent yesterday, and we find this troubling. I note also that the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff did not answer my question yesterday on the independence of OIOS, and we find that troubling as well. We intend to pursue these matters.

All of these vitally needed reforms by the United Nations must be matched by resolve on the part of troop-contributing countries to prevent and punish crimes by their personnel who participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Pre- and post-deployment training, compliance, adequate living standards for troops, discipline and compensation for victims require commitment and action by troop-contributing countries.

We understand that no system will be perfect, and there will be instances that require Member States to prosecute their citizens in their own courts. For those countries that have repatriated alleged perpetrators of these heinous crimes, we encourage them in the strongest terms to follow the lead of countries such as Morocco and be transparent and forthright in their judicial proceedings. The international community expects no less. We know this is not always an easy task, but it is an important one.

It was two years ago that the world began to wake up to the reality that we are confronted with today — that the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children at the hands of United Nations peacekeepers is not an isolated incident. It is a widespread scourge that creates lasting victims, scarred for their lifetimes. The "boys will be boys" attitude, which too long pervaded peacekeeping operations, must correctly be met with a zero tolerance policy. Now that we are aware of this problem, though, it is time to take this recognition and translate it into decisive action without delay. We should do so not just because we recognize the impact of such crimes on the success of a particular mission, but because it is our moral and ethical responsibility to do as much as possible to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children, wherever it may exist.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I wish to express Brazil's deepest concern and repudiation with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Misconduct by those who are expected to bring peace and justice to countries emerging from conflict and civil strife cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. This is a highly sensitive issue that United Nations Member States themselves must address urgently and in a comprehensive manner in the proper forum. At the same time, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation to the great majority of members of peacekeeping missions who carry out their duties in a way that properly reflects the noble aims of the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations.

It is well known that the General Assembly is the only organ with universal representation that has competence to make recommendations with regard to general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe it inappropriate for the Security Council to engage in actual lawmaking.

Brazil attaches great importance to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We believe that measures have to be taken before, during and after deployment. In our view, the United Nations could play a more active role in the training of troops, even before deployment. Prevention, a solid doctrine and comprehensive training are essential in order to avoid sexual misconduct.

On the ground, instructions should always be clear, so that peacekeepers are made well aware of the kind of behaviour that is expected from them and of the consequences of their acts. We stress the need to consolidate a precise set of rules and an effective mechanism for proper investigation and punishment, as well as to maintain the availability of an efficient reporting channel. The three available documents related to the rules of conduct for peacekeepers, valuable as they are, overlap in many respects and do not bring enough clarity to the issue. Therefore, it seems appropriate to establish a set of binding rules that are clear, concise and consistent.

Brazil shares the view that the incorporation of standards of conduct for peacekeepers into a memorandum of understanding is a positive step, provided that troop-contributing countries retain exclusive jurisdiction over their contingents. We must bear in mind, however, that a memorandum of understanding is an instrument that binds only the two or more parties directly involved in its subscription. In view of that, it would be appropriate for the discussion and eventual adoption of a model memorandum of understanding to be accompanied by other measures by the General Assembly, including the adoption of relevant resolutions and the addition of legal documents. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should continue to discuss and urgently adopt a comprehensive and coherent strategy for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

It is important to implement the decisions taken earlier in 2005 by the General Assembly on this issue, on the basis of the discussions held in the Special Committee concerning the report released by the

Secretary-General containing the recommendations of his Special Adviser on the matter, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein. Every senior authority in peacekeeping missions must be ready to take action in the event of allegations related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

In the case of military personnel, commanders must make a firm commitment to act in a decisive manner whenever there are indications of abuse on the part of their troops. Investigations should be impartial and should respect the principle of due process of law so that alleged offenders can have the chance to present their side of the case. In those cases in which judicial proceedings become necessary, the alleged offenders should be immediately repatriated to their countries of origin to face proceedings. The outcome of the exercise should enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant national authorities in the fight against sexual crimes.

Those considerations should be applied mutatis mutandis to the three components of peacekeeping operations, namely, civilian, military and police personnel. It is not appropriate for each of those components to follow a substantively different set of rules on the same issue.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Singapore. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to address the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. I would also like to express my gratitude to my friend, the Ambassador of Jordan, and to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for their comprehensive briefings. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the diligence of the thousands of peacekeepers who stand the line with courage and honour. These men and women are a credit to the principles of peace and humanitarianism. They have become integral to helping many countries recover from post-conflict situations.

Against that backdrop, it is tragic to hear of continued reports and allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct by some individuals. The Secretary-General himself has admitted that although progress has been made in eliminating exploitation and abuse, not all managers, commanders and other personnel are vigorously pursuing the United Nations zero-tolerance policy. That is a moral outrage. People in war-torn lands see Blue Helmets and expect their lives to improve. That hope is the single greatest compliment that they can pay to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). It arises from the Department's reputation for effectiveness and its strong record of achievement. So when there is sexual abuse, it is a total betrayal of trust.

Please do not misunderstand me; I do not say this with any intention to embarrass DPKO. I acknowledge the Department's crucial role in managing and resolving conflicts. I say this because it pains me to see a small minority sully the reputation of the dedicated majority. To save the main body, we need to deal with this cancer, this minority, without remorse.

To my delegation, it boils down to three critical issues. The first is clear accountability and punishment. The United Nations cannot champion the concept of the rule of law while its peacekeepers break the law. The fact that these abuses have been going on without censure for a long time is especially unacceptable. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and commanders have to send a message to the units and entities under their command that such behaviour is intolerable. Just as each peacekeeper will be held accountable for his or her actions, commanders and senior staff will also be held accountable for the misconduct of personnel under their command. Accountability must be applied fairly and across the board. Transgressors must be dealt with swiftly and consistently. By the same token, commanders and senior staff must be given the requisite unified commands if we expect them to address this problem.

The second issue is the need for a system-wide approach. Peacekeeping operations are the domain of multiple actors, given the complexity of policing conflict situations. The challenge is to find common procedures and to coordinate between disparate agencies such as the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. That would help us to avoid the duplication of responsibilities and to ensure the effective deployment of resources.

Permit me to cite the example of conduct and discipline units. Recently, several such units were formed. However, their roles remain insufficiently understood by peacekeepers on the ground. The

confusion is perhaps exacerbated by the presence of child protection advisers and gender advisers already in field missions. We need to be mindful of possible overlap and duplication of functions. In terms of deployment, we were surprised to hear that a conduct and discipline unit had been appointed for Timor-Leste. With the termination of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, would it not have been better to send that unit to another mission?

Thirdly, we need to evaluate the efficacy of our measures and to question whether we have provided ourselves with enough tools to root out the problem. For example, do we have more responsive investigation capacity by OIOS compared with previous investigations by DPKO? Are the new investigators better trained to deal with sexual crimes? How can so many investigations be pending? Does that mean we have insufficient investigative and prosecution capability? Do we need to look into accountability? What tools do our Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and military commanders have for monitoring problems on the ground? Do we need more?

A preliminary look at available data suggests that the number of allegations increased in 2005. My delegation urges DPKO to analyse this data and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures introduced over the past 12 months. The damage to the image of peacekeepers and DPKO must be repaired. With clear accountability, optimization of resources and a tough, clear-headed approach, we can do this. Our dedicated peacekeepers deserve no less.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the other countries aligning themselves with this statement.

In trying to help the Council make the best use of its time, I should like to draw attention to my delegation's written statement, copies of which are being distributed; I shall limit myself to a number of salient points.

It is deeply regrettable that the United Nations has had to confront instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel. It is tragic that the shameful misconduct of a few should detract from the vital contribution to peace and security made by the women and men serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The credibility of the United Nations and the viability of United Nations peacekeeping operations is undermined by such appalling behaviour. It is imperative that this scourge be stamped out.

The European Union has supported from the beginning the strong stance taken by the Secretary-General on this issue, including his initiative in appointing an Adviser on the question of sexual exploitation and abuse, Prince Zeid of Jordan. The EU has been encouraged by the sense of urgency shared by the members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations last year following publication of the report prepared by Prince Zeid (A/59/710). Last April the Special Committee made a number of recommendations for urgent action, addressed to the Secretary-General, to the Secretariat and to Member States themselves. The central theme underlying those recommendations is the need to establish and implement a policy of zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In May last year (see S/PV.5191), the Security Council added further momentum to these efforts when it welcomed the Special Committee's report (A/59/19/Add.1) and called on the Secretary-General and on troop-contributing countries to ensure implementation of the recommendations without delay. The Security Council also set itself the task of considering inclusion of provisions on prevention, monitoring, investigation and reporting of misconduct cases in its own resolutions concerning peacekeeping mandates. We are pleased to see that the Council has since acted along those lines on several occasions.

The European Union welcomes the opportunity offered by today's meeting to press for renewed efforts to ensure speedy implementation of all outstanding recommendations from the Special Committee's report. The time line for full implementation of those recommendations — no later than 1 June 2007 — must be respected.

As regards achievements to date, the EU is pleased to see that the Secretariat has already taken some of the steps that fall within its purview and has set in train measures to implement others. The EU welcomes the Secretariat's work on a revised draft model memorandum

of understanding for troop contributors and hopes that these efforts will lead to its adoption by the General Assembly before the end of its sixtieth session. The EU is also pleased to see the progress on establishing a professional and independent investigative capacity in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). It is crucial that effective cooperation be assured between OIOS and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The EU encourages collaboration between troop-contributing countries and the OIOS investigative capacity in order to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in the relevant national jurisdiction. That is vital in the fight against impunity for acts of misconduct.

Given the importance of keeping the interests of the victims, female and male, adults and children, at the forefront of all these efforts, the EU also warmly welcomes the Secretariat's progress in developing a bold and comprehensive policy on support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. We look forward to discussion on this in the upcoming session of the Special Committee. Likewise, the EU strongly supports the establishment of a sufficient number of conduct and discipline teams to meet the need for such capacity in peacekeeping missions, and it favours the transformation of the present Headquarters team into a permanent conduct and discipline unit in DPKO, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report.

High standards of conduct and discipline must be applied to all categories of peacekeeping personnel. A particular responsibility rests with us, the Member States, to train, to prepare and to hold accountable members of national contingents, including at the very senior level.

The EU has taken measures to ensure that there is a policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel participating in its own European Security and Defence Policy operations. Though individual EU member States retain jurisdiction over their national troop and police contingents, the European Union has taken steps to standardize the norms of behaviour for all categories of personnel participating in such operations. Moreover, those generic standards clarify the responsibilities of senior commanders and management, require their incorporation into the planning documents of every operation under the European Security and Defence Policy, call for the establishment of complaint procedures and reporting mechanisms and require the inclusion of education on the standards of behaviour into national as well as EU-level pre-deployment training.

None of us should become complacent on a subject as serious as this. The EU remains fully committed to intensifying its efforts, and it encourages the wider United Nations membership and the Secretariat to remain so as well.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rock (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes the opportunity to speak on this important subject. This debate demonstrates how seriously the United Nations and its Member States take the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping missions. While we consider primary consideration of the issue should remain with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, where it most is appropriately carried out, we agree that the Security Council should be seized of this issue, and in that regard we welcome today's debate.

Sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions is among the most appalling forms of breach of trust. It diminishes us all. It undermines the United Nations as an institution. It causes incalculable harm to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. And although these crimes are committed by a small number of individuals, their abuse taints the loyal and professional service of our valiant United Nations peacekeepers, who daily put their lives at risk for others.

(*spoke in English*)

Over the past year, the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) have made considerable efforts to ensure that progress is made on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Canada strongly supports the measures taken by the Secretary-General to implement a policy of zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence.

Significant steps have now been taken to bring alleged abusers to account. As of October 2005, more than 221 suspects from among peacekeeping forces had been investigated, 10 civilians had been fired and more than 88 uniformed personnel had been repatriated. The establishment of conduct and discipline units in some peacekeeping missions and at United Nations Headquarters is a very positive development. But the

policy and the measures taken by the Secretary-General will succeed only if we, as Member States, take appropriate steps to ensure that our personnel deployed on peace operations are appropriately trained and are held to the highest standards of conduct and discipline. We look forward to the day when troop-contributing countries incorporate training on sexual exploitation and abuse in their pre-deployment training programmes.

We welcome the excellent and comprehensive report (A/59/710) delivered by our colleague the Permanent Representative of Jordan, Prince Zeid, a report that is a tangible demonstration of the desire of the United Nations to proactively follow through on the Secretary-General's commitment on this very issue. As a follow-up to Prince Zeid's report, DPKO has proposed a number of measures, including in particular: the requirement that public information campaigns be undertaken to combat the culture of acceptance which has developed in peacekeeping missions; and the furnishing of support to the empowerment of local women and girls. That latter recommendation is critical if those women and girls are to be in a position to protect themselves from sexual exploitation and to seek redress when it occurs.

As Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno stated this past October during the Council's open debate on resolution 1325 (2000),

> "Beyond pointing to a series of systemic weaknesses that account for such gross misconduct, [the] problem [of sexual exploitation and abuse] should be a wake-up call for all of us to attach even more importance to incorporating a gender perspective into our work." (*S/PV.5294, p. 5*)

Canada would add that we must also closely examine how we can collectively agree on further implementation mechanisms — which may take a little longer to fully develop — and on how best we can support them. We strongly support the continued work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on this important issue at its upcoming session. We encourage the Committee to support the initiative of national investigation officers put forward by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), including the methodology for strong, direct and transparent action, while ensuring that national judicial processes are respected. We believe that it is imperative that early advice be given to a Member State when an allegation has been made against one or more of its personnel so that swift and effective action can be taken to investigate the allegation and to punish those convicted of these crimes. We are confident that the Special Committee will provide further options to implement the Secretary-General's policy and Prince Zeid's insightful report.

For our part, Canada will ensure that the military, police and civilian personnel sent by our Government on United Nations missions are well trained, professional and fully aware of their responsibilities and of the codes of conduct. We know that all countries represented in this Chamber share the same objective: to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We will achieve that goal only if all troop-contributing countries ensure that the highest training standards are followed.

We have heard time and time again of the so-called wall of silence with which Prince Zeid and his team have been met when broaching the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions. This wall of silence has kept many abuse cases from being investigated. The work of the Secretary-General, the work of DPKO, the recommendations of OIOS, the work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping and the endeavours of troop-contributing countries over the past year have shown that, when we are mobilized, change can take place. That change must continue, because sexual and gender-based violence continues to threaten women's human rights and sustainable peace and security. Our rapid and effective action has never been more critically needed.

Let us therefore commit ourselves anew to vigorous and focused action, so that we can protect those in vulnerable situations from abuse and exploitation and restore the reputation of the United Nations, and of all who represent it, for integrity and for honourable behaviour.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Guéhenno: I want to begin by thanking the Security Council and all Member States for their strong support and engagement on a very important issue. Without a steady, long-term, persistent commitment, we will not resolve that issue. For our part, we will continue to pursue this effort aggressively. As we pursue it aggressively, more allegations will surface;

that is an unpleasant part of having the kind of transparency that we want to have so that investigations can be held when they are needed. There, we will work closely with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). We hope that OIOS will get all the resources it needs to develop these investigations so that no stone is left unturned, so that every effort can be made, so that there will be follow-up, so that there will be no impunity and so that there will be accountability.

I want to say a word on the two challenges that have occupied the Council yesterday and today: the challenge of sexual exploitation and abuse and the challenge related to procurement. I believe that the challenge of sexual exploitation and abuse is actually a more daunting one, because what we are facing there is essentially a change of culture that goes far beyond the United Nations: it affects all societies and all armies around the world. That is why the effort has to include a strong partnership between the Secretariat and Member States.

The challenge related to procurement is a more complex one, for two reasons: first, because there are issues of possible fraud, mismanagement and inadequate rules; and secondly, because this is a cross-cutting issue. While the issue of fraud has to be dealt with aggressively by OIOS, pursuing its investigations, the questions of mismanagement and of inadequate rules involve two departments: the Department of Management as the central actor in the procurement process, with its procurement office; and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, because we define the needs that then lead to contracts managed by the Department of Management. That is why we have to work closely together. I am encouraged to see how, at this stage, the two departments are working closely together to address this challenge.

Finally, let me say a word to Ambassador Oshima, who was kind enough to say that he did not envy me. I would say that when one goes to a mission — and I will be travelling to a mission in a few days' time — one sees the expectations of the people there and sees the difference that the peacekeepers are making on the ground. I think the difficulties that we face are part of the effort that needs to be undertaken to strengthen this vital instrument of peacekeeping. So it may be hard; it may sometimes be unpleasant; and when we receive news of sexual exploitation and abuse or possible fraud it hurts us deeply. But at the same time, when one sees the difference that is being made on the ground, one thinks it is worth all the effort.

The President: I give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein to respond to comments and questions raised.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein: I too am grateful to you, Mr. President, and to all those who took the floor this morning for the kind remarks addressed to my team and to me.

I, too, welcome the many constructive thoughts and observations presented this morning by all my colleagues who spoke, all of which will serve us well as we press on in our work in the context of the deliberations currently taking place in the General Assembly.

The representatives of the Congo and Brazil mentioned the acute sensitivities that ordinarily accompany any discussion of this subject. I can attest that, five years ago, this sort of debate would have been absolutely impossible, and so I pay tribute to the Permanent Representative of Denmark for having arranged the Council's first formal meeting dedicated to this subject last year. Yet, while a presidential statement was issued on that occasion, the members of the Council refrained from taking the floor individually. And so, under your guidance, Sir, we are breaking new ground.

That is welcome, for we must on occasion have an open and responsible discussion of this troubling subject in all forums within the United Nations system and without prejudice to the General Assembly's leading role on this. Again, Sir, I thank you and the members of the Council for devoting some of your valuable time and your much-appreciated thoughts to this crucial subject.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5380

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5380th meeting

Friday, 24 February 2006, 12.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bolton	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	Denmark	Mr. Christensen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Gallardo
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga

Agenda

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-25372 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 12.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of the members to photocopies of a letter dated 22 February 2006 from the representative of the United States addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the Statement by the Witnesses to the Algiers Agreement on 22 February 2006. This letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2006/126.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the successful convening of the meeting of the Witnesses to the Algiers Agreements ('Witnesses') on 22 February 2006 in New York and their efforts to resolve the current impasse between Eritrea and Ethiopia, in order to promote stability between the parties and lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region.

"The Security Council calls on both parties to show maximum restraint and refrain from any threat or use of force against the other.

"The Security Council emphasizes that both parties bear the primary responsibility for the full, unconditional and expeditious implementation of the Algiers Agreements.

"The Security Council recalls that under the Algiers Agreements, both Eritrea and Ethiopia have agreed to accept the delimitation and demarcation decisions of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) as final and binding.

"In this regard, the Security Council calls on both sides to cooperate with the EEBC to implement its decisions without further delay.

"The Security Council urges the EEBC to convene a meeting with the parties to prepare to resume demarcation and strongly urges the two parties to attend the EEBC meeting and to cooperate with and abide by the requirements specified by the EEBC, in order to successfully conclude the demarcation process.

"The Security Council commends the role of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and expresses once again its deep appreciation for the contribution and dedication of the troop-contributing countries to the work of UNMEE.

"The Security Council demands that the parties permit UNMEE to perform its duties without restrictions and provide UNMEE with the necessary access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of these duties, including its mandated task to assist the EEBC in the expeditious and orderly implementation of the Delimitation Decision, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1430 (2002) and 1466 (2003).

"The Security Council calls on Member States to provide continued support for UNMEE and contributions to the Trust Fund, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1177 (1998) and referred to in article 4 (17) of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea on 12 December 2000, in order to support the demarcation process."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2006/10.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5381

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5381 st meeting

Tuesday, 28 February 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bolton	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-25561 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. De Soto to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. I now give him the floor.

Mr. De Soto: In the occupied Palestinian territory, a democratically elected Government is in the process of being formed that will be led by the Hamas list of Change and Reform, an organization which is still formally committed to the destruction of Israel and which has a condemnable record of terrorism against Israel.

Israel, which is entering the final month of a Knesset election campaign in which future policy vis-à-vis the occupied Palestinian territory is a central issue, has already halted the transfer of customs and value added tax (VAT) payments to the Palestinian Authority and tightened the closure regime in the occupied Palestinian territory.

In Lebanon, a national dialogue is scheduled to begin shortly to discuss issues of national concern, including the continuing investigation by the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIIC), the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) and Lebanon's relations with Syria.

This is an unscripted moment, particularly in Israel-Palestine. It falls to the parties to make the choices that will largely determine their future. But the international community also has an important role to play in helping the parties to make wise choices and in ensuring that we keep sight of the overall goal of achieving a two-State solution by peaceful means.

In that respect, members of the Council will recall that, when the Secretariat last briefed them, the Quartet had met in London in the aftermath of the Palestinian legislative elections. On that occasion, the Quartet congratulated the Palestinian people on an electoral process that was free, fair and secure, and stressed its conviction that all members of a new Palestinian Government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the road map. The Security Council subsequently took the same position.

The Quartet, mindful of the needs of the Palestinian people, also called for immediate measures to stabilize the Government and reminded the members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and members of a future Government of the need to respect all signed agreements. It also appealed to the international community not to punish the Palestinian electorate for its democratic choice, as expressed at the ballot box.

On 21 February, President Abbas asked Mr. Ismail Haniya of Hamas to form a Government. Mr. Haniya has three weeks to complete the task, but that period can be extended by another two weeks. The leaders of the Hamas and Fatah blocs have begun consultations on the programme of a new Government, with a view to Fatah's joining it. I should also add that Mr. Khaled Meshal, a Hamas leader based in Syria, has been visiting several countries in and outside the region.

On 19 February, a day after the inauguration of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Israeli cabinet met to consider its response to the new situation created, in the view of the Government, by the swearing-in of the new Council. Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made clear the Government of Israel's view that, in the face of Hamas' majority in the Palestinian parliament, the Palestinian Authority is turning effectively into a "terrorist Authority". Israel,

he added, would not hold contacts with an Authority led partly or completely by Hamas.

The Government of Israel decided that it would immediately withhold the payment of value added tax and customs revenue to the Palestinian Authority, which is due monthly pursuant to agreement in the framework of the Oslo accords. The Government also put a stop to the transfer by the international community of equipment for the Palestinian security forces. Additional measures, as yet unspecified, will be taken.

Israel is entering the final month of a Knesset election campaign. Since taking over as leader upon the illness of Prime Minister Sharon, the Acting Prime Minister has spoken both of entering into final status negotiations with the Palestinians, should a Palestinian Government accept the principles laid down by the Quartet, and of the possibility, if that does not happen, of setting Israel's permanent borders unilaterally, in ways that would keep all of Jerusalem and the large West Bank settlement blocs in Israel and the Jordan Valley under Israeli control.

In the reporting period, at least 32 Palestinians and one Israeli were killed by violence, while at least 130 Palestinians and 25 Israelis were wounded.

Violence instigated by Palestinians included almost daily rocket fire against Israeli targets in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip, an attack on an Israeli military post at Erez, stabbings of Israeli civilians, the kidnapping of foreigners — including an Egyptian diplomat, who was later released — and violent protests related to the publication in the West of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed. The Israeli Government has also reported having foiled several suicide bombings by Palestinians.

Israel has conducted a series of targeted killings of alleged militants and other security operations. The most extensive military operation was conducted in Nablus beginning 19 February and resulted in a number of Palestinian deaths. The Secretary-General made public statements concerning rocket attacks against Israel, targeted killings of Palestinians, and the escalation of Israeli military operations in Nablus and Gaza.

Israel has, since August, increased by about 25 per cent the number of physical obstacles to Palestinian movement within the West Bank, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. There are now 471 such obstacles. The Karni crossing, which was opened following the Agreement on Movement and Access in November, has been closed since 22 February and was also closed between 15 January and 5 February, with unavoidable consequences for the economy of Gaza.

During the reporting period, the chief Palestinian negotiator brought to our attention the details of a number of new Israeli measures in the Jordan Valley that prevent almost all Palestinian non-residents who do not work in the area from accessing that part of the West Bank.

This month, Israel carried out the evacuation of the Amona settlement outpost despite violent resistance by Israeli settlers. Israel announced further barrier construction in the Gush Etzion area, and also that it would construct a road protection fence in the southern West Bank near the original route of the barrier. On 30 January, the Quartet reiterated its concern regarding the route of the barrier — a route on which the International Court of Justice has issued a clear advisory opinion.

Since the last briefing of the Council, there have been several important developments in Lebanon. While some are encouraging, others give cause for concern. On 14 February, hundreds of thousands of people converged on Martyr's Square in Beirut on the first anniversary of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 22 others. The crowds and political leaders commemorated Hariri's contribution to Lebanon's development and reaffirmed their determination to establish the truth behind his murder and of those killed along with him.

Three days after that anniversary, on 17 February, the Government of Lebanon announced that a Lebanese national dialogue would take place. That important process will constitute a framework within which Lebanese political groups will discuss issues of national concern, such as the continuing investigation by the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission, and in particular the court of an international character to try those accused in the assassination of Rafik Hariri; the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004); and Lebanon's relations with Syria. Consultations are under way between the various political parties in preparation for the dialogue, which is scheduled to begin on

2 March. The Speaker of the House has played a key role in promoting the national dialogue, which reflects Lebanese and international consensus on the importance of addressing such issues through a Lebanese-led process involving all political actors. The United Nations stands ready to support Lebanon in the national dialogue.

On 5 February, demonstrators protesting the depiction of the prophet Muhammad in cartoons attacked the Danish embassy in Beirut.

The past month witnessed one shooting incident and a subsequent exchange of fire across the Blue Line. On 1 February, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) shot a Lebanese shepherd in the Shab'a farms area; his body was found on the following day. An investigation by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) found that he had been shot north of the Blue Line. In response to the shooting, on 3 February, Hizbullah fired two rockets in the direction of an IDF position in the area in which the shepherd's body had been found. The IDF responded with artillery and small arms fire directed at Hizbullah positions, and also launched two air strikes. Hizbullah responded with small arms fire and fired 15 Katyusha rockets at several IDF positions. The exchange of fire was limited to the Shab'a farms area. Three artillery rounds fired from unknown locations impacted approximately 200 metres east of a United Nations position near Kafr Shuba.

Israeli air violations of the Blue Line have continued, albeit less frequently during the past month. Eight air violations have been recorded since the last briefing to the Council, on 31 January (see S/PV.5361). Lebanese military and media reports have indicated that Israeli jets violated Lebanese airspace on 14 February during the first anniversary of Hariri's assassination, although those violations were not observed by UNIFIL. Jets breaking the sound barrier were heard in certain parts of the country. The United Nations reiterates its call on the Israeli authorities to halt those breaches of Lebanese sovereignty and fully respect the Blue Line.

I wish to conclude with five brief observations. First, as President Abbas recalled in his speech to the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Palestinians made fundamental choices 13 years ago, to which they remain committed. Hamas has clearly undergone an evolution of sorts with respect to its earlier rejection of those commitments, including overall respect of a ceasefire and participation in elections which it had earlier rejected. But it is too early to say whether that evolution is irreversible and whether it will continue in the right direction. The choices Hamas makes are the single most important variable that will shape the future of the conflict; and, as the Secretary-General has noted, it may take time for clarity to emerge.

Secondly, I wish to remind Council members of the need — stressed by the Quartet — to stabilize the finances of the Palestinian Authority during the period remaining to the caretaker Government. The Quartet's Special Envoy, James Wolfensohn, has recently stressed to Quartet members that the Palestinian Authority faces a budget deficit of at least $260 million over the expected lifespan of the caretaker Government, mainly because of Israel's decision to withhold tax and customs revenue transfers of up to $130 million — money that belongs to Palestinians. I welcome the decision of the European Union, announced yesterday, to provide $143 million of emergency assistance. I recall in that regard the appeal by the Quartet to the international donor community to do its part to avert this short-term crisis.

Thirdly, the formation of a new Government and its programme are awaited in order to assess its commitment to the principles the Quartet has articulated and to make determinations regarding future assistance in that light. We should be alert to the danger that cutting off assistance prior to that date might be interpreted by Palestinians and the Arab world as a whole as punishment of the Palestinian people for the way they voted on 25 January.

Fourthly, in the Palestinian context it is very difficult to make a neat distinction between humanitarian and emergency aid and basic service provision. Also, we must keep in mind that the Palestinian Authority is not something that can be turned on and off like a light switch. It is through the Authority that basic social and economic services and salaries are provided. If those services are not provided and if those salaries are not paid, the humanitarian, economic, institutional, political and security consequences could be severe. And if the Authority — essentially a creature of the Oslo process — is allowed to collapse or is sacrificed, then with it may go hopes of achieving a Palestinian State in a reasonable time frame, for a functioning Authority is an essential building block of a Palestinian State. I need hardly

elaborate on the consequences of that happening — for the parties, the region and international security.

Finally, today no less than yesterday, a credible political horizon for resolving the conflict is vital. Peace cannot be imposed unilaterally, and it cannot be achieved durably outside the regional framework of the Middle East peace process. In that respect, we have seen the engagement of certain regional countries in recent weeks, and their efforts to bring back onto the agenda the Arab peace initiative, which is a building block of the road map and a vital part of the agreements to which continued adherence by the Palestinians is expected.

Indeed, the Quartet has signalled its determination to consult closely with the key regional actors. And I stress the Quartet's own continued commitment to the road map and to the principles that underlie it, which include non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and respect for previous agreements. I very much hope that a new Palestinian Government, fully cognizant of the responsibilities now thrust on its shoulders, will commit to those principles not because of the appearance of pressure from outside but because the Palestinian people have a right to expect that their new Government will address their aspirations for peace and statehood.

The President: I thank Mr. De Soto for his briefing.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Following the adjournment of this meeting, I shall convene a meeting in order for the Council to take action on a draft resolution concerning the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5382

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5382nd meeting

Tuesday, 28 February 2006, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President	Mr. Bolton	(United States of America)
Members	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj

Agenda

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-25600 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/130, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1660 (2006).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5383

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 March 2006

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5383rd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 13 March 2006, at 10.05 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 13 March 2006, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 5383rd meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Ethiopia and Eritrea.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Legwaila and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had a constructive exchange of views."

06-26869 (E) 130306

United Nations S/PV.5384

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5384th meeting

Tuesday, 14 March 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mayoral	(Argentina)
Members:	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Demin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Power
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Olson

Agenda

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2006/140)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-26980 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. John Bolton, Permanent Representative of the United States, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of February 2006. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in recognizing Ambassador Bolton's great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2006/140)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/140, containing the report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2006/155, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1661 (2006).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5385

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5385th meeting

Tuesday, 14 March 2006, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mayoral	(Argentina)
Members:	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2006/145)

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06-26986 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2006/145)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Koenigs to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/145, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Koenigs: I would like to thank the Council for this opportunity to report on the situation in Afghanistan during our deliberations concerning the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The written report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/145) describes key events of the past six months, together with proposals for adjustments to that mandate. My remarks will focus on developments since Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno's last briefing to the Council, on 10 February, and on prospects for the Afghanistan Compact.

As the Council is aware, the London Conference on Afghanistan, which was held on 31 January and 1 February, reaffirmed the strong commitment of the international community to support Afghanistan for the next five years and beyond. In many respects, the benchmarks and time frames laid down by the Afghanistan Compact are as ambitious as, and even more wide-ranging than, those of the Bonn Agreement. By endorsing the Compact as the framework for international partnership with Afghanistan over the next five years, the Council recognized the mutual obligations and the discipline that is needed to ensure the implementation of that road map, which aims to improve the lives of Afghans.

It is already clear that two priorities will be essential to the success of that agenda. First, Afghanistan's institutions must be strengthened on all levels to the point where they are effective enough to deliver basic services. Secondly, our strategy for tackling hard security challenges must evolve to meet outstanding threats.

As to political developments, the first months of work by the new National Assembly have demonstrated the promise of Afghanistan's new institutions. Both houses have established rules of procedure and sector-based commissions. Security and development issues have been freely debated. On

27 February, the Wolesi Jirga decided to question and confirm cabinet ministers on an individual basis.

The coming months will test the ability of the Afghan Government and parliament to work constructively to adopt a new budget, agree on the composition of the new cabinet and forge a legislative agenda that reflects national priorities under the new Compact. An assembly of all provincial councils in Kabul in early March showed the determination of those elected representatives to deliver early results.

The political agenda is also increasingly focused on justice-related issues. President Karzai has indicated his determination to significantly renew Afghanistan's Supreme Court. He has also agreed to launch the Action Plan on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation, together with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and myself, in the coming weeks. In the meantime, initiatives to deal with past crimes in Afghanistan are gaining momentum. In a much publicized case, a former head of intelligence in 1978 and 1979 was sentenced to death on 25 February 2006 by the National Security Primary Court for his part in the assassination of prisoners. The trial was closely followed by Afghans and was criticized for failing to conform to international standards of due process. It nevertheless illustrated the strong aspiration of Afghans to truth and justice with respect to the crimes committed over decades of violent conflict.

As to security developments, the bomb attack in Kabul directed against Meshrano Jirga Speaker and former President Mojadeddi two days ago illustrated the importance that Afghanistan's enemies continue to attach to disrupting the democratic process by violent means. The attack was emblematic of national trends with regard to security, which continue to be a serious concern.

The winter months of 2005 and 2006 have witnessed a rise in insurgent and terrorist attacks and more sophisticated tactics. There has been a marked increase in the incidence of larger and more deadly explosive devices, including suicide bombings, particularly in the South and East of the country. The perpetrators of those attacks have shown a growing intent to target civilians, Government officials and reconstruction workers, such as road-builders. The recent kidnapping of four foreigners in Helmand province and an unconfirmed report of the Taliban claiming to have killed them are also of great concern in that respect.

The prevalence of such attacks in Farah, Helmand, Kandahar, Kunar and elsewhere points to the persistence and even consolidation of the command and control networks of Taliban, Al-Qaida and associated groups in the region. Any resolution of that challenge will require redoubled international efforts to dismantle terrorist structures that represent a common threat to the security of both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

There are also security concerns in provinces less affected by insurgency and terrorism. In Farah province, the senseless killing on 4 March of Afghan engineer Mohammad Hashim, a contractor to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, has shocked and saddened the United Nations family. In Helmand and Nangarhar provinces, large-scale poppy eradication efforts have encountered determined resistance.

At the same time, the Afghan Government has moved to address those threats both by policy and successful crisis management. At a seminar held in Kabul from 26 to 28 February, the National Security Council considered a blueprint for Afghanistan's national security policy. It calls for fully functional Afghan security institutions addressing internal and external threats to peace and security in an integrated fashion, under civilian supervision, and on a fiscally sustainable basis.

Addressing security issues, the completion of security sector reform remains crucial to the peacebuilding process. The Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programme has gained profile and momentum in recent weeks. In total, over 19,000 weapons have now been collected in all parts of the country. In Kapisa province, under the leadership of the Governor, a complete survey of those groups targeted for disbandment is being finalized, and that process will be repeated over the coming months in Farah, Herat, Laghman and Takhar provinces. Since the nationwide ammunition disposal programme began last year, over 30,000 tons of unwanted and dangerous munitions have been consolidated and destroyed. However, it will require strong and sustained commitment to meet the benchmarks for DIAG, munitions and mine action prescribed in the Afghanistan Compact.

The key development within the international military forces in recent weeks was the transfer of Regional Command South under Operation Enduring Freedom from a United States to a multinational brigade on 28 February in Kandahar. Once fully fielded, that force will feature robust capabilities from the armed forces of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, Australia and other countries, with a deployed strength of 6,000 troops in Afghanistan's five southern provinces. That represents an increase of 50 per cent over previous levels and shows international resolve to meet the threat of terrorist-based insurgency.

Improved border management is also required to meet several key objectives under the Compact, from drug interdiction to revenue collection. At the Doha II Conference, co-chaired by the Governments of Germany and Qatar on 27 and 28 February, 21 States and eight international organizations reaffirmed their commitment to improved cooperation with Afghanistan on border security and border management. However, I remain concerned that the resources are not yet available to implement those proposals, including with regard to police and border police salaries.

The agenda before the Government of Afghanistan and the international community is a heavy one. Whereas the Bonn Agreement was centred on the re-establishment of legitimate national institutions, a key challenge under the Afghanistan Compact will be to extend the reach of Government at the local level. That will require security, development, civil society and private sector actors to be more present in areas not yet touched by recovery. It will require programmes that ensure the participation of Afghans in the development of their country, while meeting the needs of vulnerable groups and poor regions.

It will also challenge Afghanistan's Government to make functioning institutions of justice and the rule of law more and more a reality in the communities in which most Afghans live. It will also require the implementation of Afghanistan's new obligations to protect and monitor the human rights of its citizens.

Afghanistan can meet those expectations only by reforming and strengthening the Government institutions necessary to develop its human capital, harness the potential of agriculture and natural resources and set conditions for the emergence of a vibrant private sector. Enhanced regional cooperation in that regard is also essential.

The report before the Council outlines a number of proposals on how UNAMA, having completed its support for the Bonn process, can continue to play a role as a special political mission, providing advice to the Government of Afghanistan in particular with a view to further strengthening its State institutions. UNAMA would continue to be an integrated mission and to plan and coordinate United Nations humanitarian and development activities. As co-chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board to be established by the Compact, UNAMA would aim to promote Government visibility in international assistance activities and to advocate greater coherence of the overall reconstruction efforts. As the Secretary-General noted in his report, success in this endeavour will "also depend on the mutually reinforcing role and full cooperation of all stakeholders."

As I mentioned earlier, it will be vital for the Afghan Government to extend its reach to underserved areas of Afghanistan. The proposals submitted for the Security Council's consideration therefore include the possibility of a modest expansion of UNAMA's field presence to accompany and support the Government in these efforts, subject, of course, to security conditions. The implementation of this mandate would require additional and sufficient security resources, including air and medical evacuation support.

As the clock of the Afghanistan Compact starts ticking, the first benchmark — the establishment of a clear and transparent appointments mechanism for senior-level civil service positions — will need to be met after six months.

By endorsing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness last week, the Government of Afghanistan underscored the need to harmonize its efforts and those of the international community to ensure that our common vision for sustainable peace and development is realized in Afghanistan.

In closing, I would like to call upon the Afghan Government to do its utmost to meet the benchmarks set out in these documents and to encourage the international community to show continuing generosity and commitment in this next important phase of the peace process.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Koenigs for his briefing.

Before opening the floor to speakers, I wish to request all participants to limit their statements, as far as possible, to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this regard.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): First, I would like to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs for his presentation of the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Afghanistan and on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), including its new mandate. I take this opportunity also to wish Mr. Koenigs every success in his important and demanding duties as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. Furthermore, I would like to make the following remarks.

The report of the Secretary-General comprehensively covers all major developments that have taken place in Afghanistan during the past six months. The holding of the parliamentary and provincial elections on 18 September and the inauguration of the new parliament on 19 December brought the Bonn process to a successful conclusion. The adoption of the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference on 31 January, and its endorsement by the Security Council on 15 February, set in motion the new process for attaining full-fledged political and socio-economic development in a peaceful, stable and secure environment, under the leadership of the Afghan Government.

UNAMA's contribution to these overall positive political developments has once again been indispensable and commendable.

However, we are well aware of the many and serious challenges still facing Afghanistan. We agree with the observations made by the Secretary-General regarding the need to complete reforms in the security, administration, justice and humanitarian sectors, as well as to establish the rule of law and full respect for human rights, especially in those provinces where warlords and drug networks continue to reign.

In particular, we are gravely concerned by the recent escalation of violence against civilians, aid workers, the Afghan military and international security forces, moderate politicians, Government employees and educators. If such incidents continue, all efforts and activities aimed at the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact will be at great risk.

We look forward to the amelioration of the security situation, mainly through the further strengthening of the Afghan National Army and police forces and the launching of the programme for the disbandment of illegal armed groups. In addition, we believe that the expansion of International Security Assistance Force forces in the south and the strengthening of the work of provincial reconstruction teams will lead to improving security and facilitating reconstruction and economic development in the countryside.

Of course, the underpinning of the armed attacks, violent clashes, suicide bombings and burning of schools is the narcotics industry. The Afghan Government and the international community have undertaken serious measures to tackle the problem, but so far to no avail. If the links among large-scale poverty among farmers, poppy cultivation, the narcotics trade, corruption and terrorists are not severed, all our efforts, including the money spent, to consolidate peace, democratic institutions, reconstruction, stability, economic growth and social development in Afghanistan will continue to be undermined.

The people and the Government of Afghanistan have made remarkable progress and are determined to overcome the remaining challenges, however daunting they might be. The further engagement of the United Nations and the contributions of individual countries, as well as those of non-governmental organizations, are needed in order to meet the clear benchmarks set out in the Afghanistan Compact for the new five-year Afghan development phase.

In this respect, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal for the continued presence of the United Nations in Afghanistan through assigning new tasks to UNAMA, in accordance with the coordination and monitoring role of the United Nations, in implementing the provisions of the Afghanistan Compact regarding security, governance, the rule of law and human rights, economic and social

development, as well as the cross-cutting issue of counter-narcotics.

Greece supports the new mandate and structure of UNAMA proposed by the Secretary-General and is ready to participate constructively in consultations on a draft resolution of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country's commitment to continuing its political, military, economic and humanitarian involvement in Afghanistan. Let me just mention that, at the London Conference, Greece pledged $5 million in development projects. In parallel, we have undertaken the restoration of the Museum of Kabul as an indication of our commitment to the preservation of the unique Afghan cultural heritage.

Afghanistan and its people deserve a peaceful and prosperous future, and they have our full support on the long road ahead.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): First, I would like to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs for his very informative briefing. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has been making an indispensable contribution to consolidating peace and promoting reconstruction and development in that country. We also commend the UNAMA staff for their dedication, and we expect that, under Mr. Koenigs' leadership, UNAMA will continue its good work.

The Bonn process was completed successfully. The London Conference at the end of January, with the launching of the Afghanistan Compact, was a significant event in the laying out of a post-Bonn framework for continued international commitment and assistance for the country.

The fact is, however, that many challenges continue to face Afghanistan's future, including in the areas of security, governance, economic and social development, and — especially worrying — that of illicit narcotics. To meet those challenges, determined efforts are needed on the part of the Afghan Government, supported by continuous assistance from the international community. Japan appreciates the commitment shown by the Government of Afghanistan in vigorously pursuing its national objectives in these critical areas, such as through the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS). For the next phase of national reconstruction and reconciliation to be a success, it is considered essential that single-minded efforts be made towards the implementation of I-ANDS and of the Compact, with full ownership of the process by Afghans themselves, assisted by well-coordinated international support from the United Nations and the donor community.

The Secretary-General has reported that the National Assembly is now engaging in active deliberations and debates on issues ranging from administration of the country to threats to its stability. We are encouraged by this positive development. We also look forward to the early confirmation of Cabinet ministers by the National Assembly. Through this process, we hope that Afghanistan will overcome the difficulties so often experienced in the early stages of establishing a democratic political system.

Among the problems that continue to plague the country and its people are those posed by the insecurity and lawlessness that prevail in many provinces, as the Secretary-General's report has highlighted. To improve security, the size of the Afghan National Army and National Police must be expanded, their capabilities improved and judicial reform achieved without delay. At the same time, it is important to call on all Afghan parties and groups to exercise restraint and avoid resorting to violence, and all should engage in the conduct of political affairs in a peaceful manner and strive for national reconciliation.

Considerable progress has, in fact, been made by the Afghan Government and the international community in achieving reform throughout the security sector. Japan has been a major contributor to the promotion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). We appreciate the efforts of the Afghan Government to bring disarmament and demobilization to a conclusion. With disarmament and demobilization having been completed, it now remains to work on completing reintegration, and we hope that this will be done at the earliest possible date.

With DDR almost achieved, Japan attaches special importance to the disbandment of illegal armed groups programme as an urgent item on our current agenda. This is an Afghan-led programme and, as such, it must be carried out by all the Government authorities concerned, acting together. We strongly hope that the Government will show the necessary resolve and commitment to make the programme yet another success. This, of course, requires international support for weapons collection and the collection of

information. In that connection, I am pleased to announce that Japan is planning to hold an international conference in Tokyo later this year on DDR and the disbandment of illegal armed groups. We call on the donor community to lend its valuable support to this vital project, which is directly related to improving security on a sustainable basis.

As for the question of the extension of the mandate of UNAMA, Japan supports the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, taking into consideration the launch of the Compact. Nevertheless, the "light footprint" approach should be maintained, in view of the need to encourage ownership on the part of the Afghan Government. Also, a scrap-and-build approach should be considered, where necessary, in deciding on the optimal allocation of personnel and funding resources.

We believe that, as Afghanistan moves into a new phase of its post-Bonn reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts, a Security Council mission should make a visit to Afghanistan to appraise the situation and demonstrate the continued commitment of the international community to providing assistance during this phase. In our view, such a mission could be organized soon after the UNAMA mandate is extended. It should be small and mobile, considering the prevailing security situation.

In conclusion, Japan is now working on a draft resolution on the extension of the UNAMA mandate. We hope to be able to present such a draft resolution for adoption by 23 March, taking into consideration the views expressed in this meeting by both members and non-members of the Security Council.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary- General, for having presented the report on the situation in Afghanistan. Let me at the outset take this opportunity to pay tribute to and thank the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan's neighbours, and donor countries for their collective efforts in accompanying Afghanistan on its path to becoming a vibrant and stable member of the international community. The Afghan Compact is a welcome new framework for partnership between Afghanistan and the international community.

In the last four years, Afghanistan has made significant progress towards building a democratic State with accountable institutions. Progress has also been registered in the rehabilitation of the basic infrastructure required to support economic and social development.

The most urgent needs, which require ongoing attention, include the strengthening of Government structures; enforcing the basics of good governance, justice and the rule of law; upholding human rights; disarming and disbanding illegal armed groups; continuing with efforts to reduce the production and trafficking of narcotics; and laying the foundation for sustainable economic and social development. Similar attention also needs to be directed at strengthening the justice system, which lacks qualified personnel and the infrastructure to administer justice fairly and effectively. It is equally important that the leadership should also address social issues such as housing, the continuing empowerment of women, and the reintegration of returnees from neighbouring countries.

It is clear that a persistent challenge remains in the area of security, as suicide bombings continue, using increasingly sophisticated methods. The situation demands enhanced training and a well-equipped National Police with the capacity to project itself beyond Kabul and effectively cover the whole country. That should go hand in hand with the building of a fully operational Afghan National Army whose immediate assignment would be to disband illegal armed groups and terrorist structures.

We urge all those involved in violence to stop their illegal and criminal activities and instead to join in the task of restoring security and development to the Afghan people.

We believe that the Government and the people must lead and own the process. However, they need support from the international community, as was demonstrated by the recent launching of the Afghanistan Compact in London, which promises progress and stability for the still-fragile institutions built on the foundations of the Bonn process. We commend all those involved in the preparation and launching of the Compact. That creative and timely initiative was aimed at sustaining international attention and support so as to ensure that Afghanistan post-conflict institutions are sustained and that the country does not slide back into a crisis.

With international support, Afghanistan can now embark on the next stage of State consolidation. UNAMA has successfully completed its task with respect to the Bonn Agreement, but it continues to have an important role to play in Afghanistan. We support the extension of its adjusted mandate to enable it to continue to play a supportive role with respect to the Afghan people and Government in the implementation of the new Afghanistan Compact.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank Mr. Koenigs for his briefing. I should like to take this opportunity also to wish him every success in the very important mission he will be undertaking. On a personal note, let me say that we are particularly pleased that a United Nations official from Germany is following in the footsteps of a United Nations official from France.

I shall not present an analysis of the situation, which was very clearly set out by the new Special Representative. However, I would like to say that the situation is marked by a dual paradox. The first is that, while there has been considerable progress in Afghanistan on all fronts, there continues to exist, as previous speakers have underscored, a risk of destabilization that cannot be discounted given an upsurge in the level of insecurity. That has both internal and external causes and is manifested in acts of terrorism. But it is also fuelled by and rooted in other disturbing trends: the presence of armed groups, the drug-trafficking networks and, admittedly, to a certain extent, the weakness of the administration. The first paradox therefore entails not only the risk of destabilization, but also a risk that international assistance will be impeded.

As for the second paradox, I believe that a sign of our collective success — and, in particular, the success of the people and the Government of Afghanistan — is that matters are now in the hands of representative, freely elected and, I might add, capable Afghan institutions. However, we must continue to shoulder the responsibility of a presence in and assistance to Afghanistan. As we all know, the merit and success of the London Conference was the definition of a new contract between the international community and Afghanistan, adapted to the new context in which the Afghans are now managing their affairs.

For my part, I would recall that a major focus of the Afghanistan Compact is the development of the country's institutions, including local institutions. That is, we must strengthen the institutions and ensure robust decentralization. That is an enormous challenge, and we believe that the United Nations has a role to play in this area.

That brings me to the Secretary-General's proposals. I believe that, among the proposals before us and the tasks that the Special Representative has set for himself, there are a certain number that are of particular importance for us.

The first is the coordination of international efforts. I know that that has already been done. But, given the new context, we must find formulas that permit greater effectiveness in the coordination of international efforts, and only the Special Representative can do that. I am aware that, in that respect he is working on the establishment of the mechanism set out at the London Conference.

Secondly, I believe that the United Nations must intensify the efforts whose added value has been obvious in recent years. That is true, for example, with the disarmament of illegal armed groups. It is true with the preparation of future elections — an area in which the Special Representative has unique experience.

Thirdly, my delegation agrees that the role of the United Nations Mission must be extended to the provinces. Clearly, conditions must permit that, it must be done cautiously. But, at the same time, we believe that it is an inevitable operational consequence of the focus, set out in London, on institution-building, including in the provinces.

Fourthly, I am almost embarrassed to recall this, but I must: the regional dimension remains key. We have all recently seen, on television, very disturbing elements concerning the relations between Afghan authorities and certain neighbouring countries. We must all make a collective effort to help restore normal cooperation. Here also, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan clearly has a particular role to play to establish an atmosphere of trust between Afghanistan and its neighbours.

Like previous speakers, I am obliged to say a few words about our contribution at the national level. With regard to civilian assistance, we have taken decisions to significantly increase our commitments for the years ahead. For example, we will devote €33 million to rural development and to support for developing the

private sector. In particular, as I already had the opportunity to say to my colleagues, we will increase our security contribution. We will take over the command of Kabul province within the International Security Assistance Force for an eight-month period, beginning this summer. At that time, we will increase our contingent to more than 1,000 men. We will also continue to step up our support for the training of the Afghan National Army, particularly by deploying 100 officers in National Army training teams.

Indeed, within the framework of the new Compact, the relationship between Afghanistan and the international community should not involve only international institutions; there must be a strong presence of international institutions, but that does not relieve us of our responsibilities at the national level. I wish to assure members that France will be present to meet the challenge.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): Let me join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2006/145), which focuses on key areas in the remarkable transformation that the Afghan people and Government are undertaking with the assistance of the United Nations. Also, a very warm welcome to Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We thank him for his frank and comprehensive assessment of Afghanistan's successes, the challenges ahead and the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in facilitating progress in this very complex environment.

Before proceeding any further, I should like to fully associate Denmark with the statement to be delivered later in the debate by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

At the outset, I would like to stress that Denmark fully supports the Afghanistan Compact. In order to support the implementation of the Compact, Denmark has made a long-term, fully financed pledge of more than $100 million for development efforts in Afghanistan and has decided to substantially increase the Danish military presence, with the majority of troops placed in the troubled southern Helmand province.

At the London Conference, the United Nations was given a key role in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. We agree that there is a need to extend UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months, and we support the broad outline of UNAMA's main tasks and priorities, set out by the Secretary-General in his report, as they flow from the Compact.

I have six comments or questions on the role, responsibilities and institutional set-up of UNAMA, to which I would like to turn now.

First, we very much agree that reinforcing the new and fragile democratic institutions provided through the Bonn process is a major task for UNAMA. The scope for failure is abundant, and the need for the good offices of and concerted action by UNAMA cannot be overemphasized. We urge the Special Representative to continue an active dialogue with the entire political spectrum as well as with the President and Government in order to keep the positive development in the political processes on track.

Secondly, promoting human rights should, in our view, continue to be a high-priority task for UNAMA. It includes improving the situation of women and promoting women's rights. This entails UNAMA support for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and for the National Action Plan for Women, and it implies that UNAMA should insist that the President appoint qualified judges to the Supreme Court — judges who have the full implementation of the constitution at heart.

Thirdly, reform of the public sector, including the justice sector, is indispensable if the Afghans are to enjoy transparency, accountability and the rule of law. This is also the only way for the new democratic institutions to transform their good intentions and decisions into tangible improvements for the country as a whole. Add to this that public-sector reform can and should have a major impact in reducing corruption, combating drugs and creating an environment conducive to legal economic activities. UNAMA should make active use of its leading role in the United Nations family in Afghanistan to press for concerted action in this field, in full coordination with the international donor community.

Fourthly, UNAMA's presence outside Kabul must be significantly enhanced, as Mr. Koenigs has already pointed out. From our perspective, to a great extent the key to the Compact's success rests on progress in the provinces. A strong UNAMA presence provides enhanced coordination, information flows, trust and

impetus from all parties — the population, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the international aid community, Governments, etc. — to the efforts to improve security, governance and development. The Secretary-General touches upon this in his report, and I would appreciate it if the Special Representative would elaborate on his plans in this regard.

Fifthly, UNAMA has chosen to maintain the split of its activities into two pillars — Pillar I, dealing with political affairs, and Pillar II, with relief, recovery and development, including cross-cutting issues. This split entails unavoidable overlaps. For example, human rights are part of Pillar I, while gender — which has clear rights aspects — is included in Pillar II. We understand that the split may be necessary from an institutional point of view. It does, however, give rise to coordination issues that need to be tackled head-on.

For our sixth and final point, we urge the United Nations to prioritize timely recruitment of highly qualified staff for the positions with UNAMA in Afghanistan, not least in the provinces, where vacancies at places with only one or two internationals can have and have had a detrimental effect.

Before concluding, let me turn to the worsening security situation, which continues to be of great concern. We urge countries in the region to do their utmost to assist the Afghan Government in stemming the tide of insurgents crossing the borders into Afghanistan, as well as in blocking financial flows to the Taliban and Al Qaida — flows that are, inter alia, used to buy the services of poor, illiterate farmers to kill mullahs, school teachers, Government security personnel and soldiers from countries assisting in the stabilization of Afghanistan.

We have seen many successes and have been through trying times in Afghanistan. But there is no doubt that the next 12 months will prove to be another test of our resolve — individually and collectively — to assist Afghanistan on its path to a stable, just and prosperous future.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes Mr. Tom Koenigs to the Security Council to give his first briefing to the Council in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. We congratulate him again on his assumption of this important post. China will continue to fully support him and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in their work.

Afghanistan has completed the political transition process stipulated in the Bonn Agreement and has taken preliminary steps to establish modern institutions of national authority. The national economy is maintaining a fairly rapid growth momentum, and there have been improvements in people's livelihoods. The reconfiguration and reform of the security sector is moving forward at a steady pace. The national army and national police have begun to assume greater responsibilities in maintaining national security. Afghanistan is actively seeking international and regional cooperation to create a favourable environment for national stability and development. These achievements would not have been possible without the assiduous efforts of the Afghan Government and people, the generous support of the international community and the hard work of UNAMA.

At the same time, the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan is still confronting a multitude of difficulties and challenges. The ability of the Afghan national institutions needs to be further strengthened. Economic and social development cannot yet meet the people's basic needs. The question of narcotics and the activities of extremists and terrorists remain a threat to the peace and stability of Afghanistan.

Against this backdrop the London Conference on Afghanistan signed the Afghanistan Compact and endorsed the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy submitted by the Afghan Government. It not only embodies the consensus and determination of the international community, but it also proposes specific measures and a pragmatic time frame for peace and the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the next five years. It also marks the beginning of a new phase in peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

In order to implement the Afghanistan Compact and consolidate the Bonn Process, the Afghan Government should first focus, on a priority basis, on stability and development and should complete basic reconstruction in the areas of administration, economy and the rule of law so that the Afghan people can better enjoy the dividends of peace and stability. Next, the United Nations should continue to play a central and coordinating role in the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan and in international assistance. In this

connection, China endorses the Secretary-General's relevant recommendations and agrees to a one-year extension of UNAMA and adjustments to its mandate so that it can better accomplish the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

Thirdly, the international community should sustain its attention and input regarding Afghanistan and ensure timely delivery of pledged assistance. At the same time, it should also carefully heed and respect Afghanistan's concerns and proposals and encourage it to continue to enhance its sense of ownership and assume more responsibilities. Regional cooperation is an effective way for the international community and neighbouring countries to help Afghanistan achieve stability, development and integration with the international community. We hope that Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries will fully utilize existing mechanisms, deepen regional cooperation, enhance mutual political trust and seek joint development.

As a good neighbour of Afghanistan, China has always closely followed the peace and reconstruction process there. To ensure mutual benefit, win-win results and joint progress, we stand ready to scrupulously implement the Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, the Declaration on Counter-Narcotics, within the framework of the Kabul Declaration, and the Declaration on Encouraging Closer Cooperation in Trade, Border Crossing and Investment, and other major instruments. China is ready to honour the new pledges made at the international Conference on Afghanistan and to continue, as always, to provide long-term cooperation and support to Afghanistan.

Even though the road ahead may not be smooth, the Afghan people, who have gone through so many tribulations, cherish peace and stability and yearn for security and development. We have every reason to believe that, with the efforts of the Afghan Government and people and the support of the international community, Afghanistan will continue to achieve remarkable results in the new phase of its national reconstruction.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I would like at the outset to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing and observations. We wish him all the best in his demanding mission. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for peace and security. The report provides a clear and objective analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan, and we share the view of the Secretary-General on the progress made so far, as well as on the serious challenges that remain to be tackled.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. That is why I will limit my statement to a few comments.

We believe that the launch of the Afghanistan Compact represents a genuine milestone in the Afghan reconstruction process, in which the United Nations has a central and impartial coordinating role. The Compact provides a solid framework for the next stage of the transition of Afghanistan with Afghan ownership and international support establishing the conditions in which the Afghan people can enjoy representative government and self-sustaining peace and development.

We agree that the tasks in all four key areas and the timelines for their implementation set out in the Compact are very demanding. At the same time, we are convinced that they are realistic and achievable, provided that both sides fulfil their commitments. It is necessary to make sure, however, that measures in all key areas — security, governance, development and eliminating the narcotics industry — are implemented in a coordinated manner and that meaningful progress is achieved in each of those areas. In this context, we welcome the decision to establish a Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, co-chaired by a senior Afghan Government official and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with the purpose of ensuring coordination and coherence of the implementation of the Compact. In this connection, I would like to ask Mr. Koenigs to share with us a few more details on the composition of the Board and a prospective date when it will be fully operational.

Security remains essential for long-term reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. We note with satisfaction that progress has been achieved in security sector reform. However, we are concerned about the numerous recent acts of extremist violence and terrorism, which remind us that Afghanistan remains a very insecure place. The international community must provide all necessary assistance to the

Afghan people and Government to extend and exercise authority across the country and create the environment required to enable reconstruction and nation-building activities to continue.

In this regard, we welcome and commend the decision to strengthen the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and to expand the areas of its operation to the south and east of the country. We believe that ISAF will also provide crucial support and assistance in the security sector reform process, including the disarmament and demobilization of illegal armed groups.

Last but not least, we believe that the promotion of human rights, with special attention being paid to the rights of women and children, should be a very important cross-cutting priority in the process of transformation. In this regard, we agree with the Secretary-General that a measure of success in meeting Afghanistan challenges will also depend on the extent to which respect for human rights is institutionalized.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in supporting the Afghan Government. We attach the utmost importance to the work of the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other agencies of the United Nations, and we believe that UNAMA should continue to play an important role in the foreseeable future. We support the extension of its adjusted mandate, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report, and we agree with Mr. Koenigs that, when we consider UNAMA's field expansion and presence in the provinces, special attention needs to be placed on security measures and resources for United Nations personnel.

Slovakia strongly supports the political and economic transition of Afghanistan. We will continue to contribute to the transformation and stabilization processes through maintaining our peacekeepers in the country and providing assistance to the Afghan police and army. Financial resources for official development assistance projects have been approved for 2006, and Afghanistan remains one of our priority countries.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): I would like to join other delegations in thanking Mr. Koenigs for his briefing this morning and for the work that he and his team are doing. The United States is grateful for the hard work and sacrifice of the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We fully support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate and strongly urge other nations to do the same.

The remarkable transition in Afghanistan since 2001 has underscored the importance of UNAMA's contributions. Throughout the Bonn process, UNAMA contributed enormously to progress towards our shared goals in Afghanistan.

The recent London Conference marked the end of the Bonn process and the launching of the Afghanistan Compact — the new foundation for the international community's support for Afghanistan. The United Nations role in the formulation of the Compact and in guiding reconstruction, governance and development efforts in Afghanistan will be essential to ensuring success over the next five years. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan is co-chairing the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board created by the Compact, the United Nations responsibilities in Afghanistan will increase. We look to the Special Representative to use his role on the Board to maintain momentum in Afghan reconstruction, to improve the effectiveness of international reconstruction and assistance and to persuade donors and the Afghan Government to stay the course, as outlined in the Compact. United Nations support and resources are critical to making the Board an effective organization.

Our objective is to ensure strong leadership and levels of financial and technical assistance adequate to make progress throughout the country. A key measure of progress will be growth in Afghan capacity. Under the Compact, the Government of Afghanistan has committed itself over the next five years to meeting specific goals of improving security by fully developing the Afghan national army and the Afghan national police, providing good governance based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, promoting economic and social development and building a legal economy free from the corruption of drug production and trafficking.

We look forward to working with UNAMA to help Afghanistan reach the goals established in the Afghanistan Compact, the realization of which will benefit the broader region as well as Afghanistan. The support for the Afghanistan Compact demonstrates the international community's firm commitment to security, democracy and economic development in Afghanistan, while highlighting the continuing

requirement for a strong United Nations role through its leadership in many ongoing programmes.

The United States remains committed to Afghanistan for the long term. We look forward to working with UNAMA to improve security for Afghanistan, including the promotion of international human rights standards, with a reformed and fully capable Afghan police force and judicial system.

With UNAMA, we seek to help Afghanistan to develop its human capital through strengthened access to health care and education for women and men at all levels. Together with the people of Afghanistan, their democratically elected representatives and UNAMA, we look forward to creating a peaceful Afghan State that is a source of stability in the central South Asia region.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), namely, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

We express our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tom Koenigs for the detailed briefing on the current situation in Afghanistan. We note with satisfaction that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to perform its important functions effectively.

The Afghanistan Compact, adopted by consensus at the London Conference, has showed that the international community is determined to continue to provide large-scale assistance to the Afghan people in the post-conflict rehabilitation of their country. It is important that in this new, post-Bonn stage the central role in coordinating international efforts on the Afghan track continues to belong to the United Nations.

As adopted, the Compact provides for clear time frames for the practical implementation by the Afghan Government — with international assistance — of large-scale tasks in the areas of security, governance, human rights, development and the fight against the drug threat in the coming five years. We expect that the Afghan authorities will act with full awareness of their broad responsibilities for those tasks.

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board is meant to play a useful role in monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. We expect that all the key players in Afghan affairs will be involved in the activities of the Board as permanent participants. That will contribute to effective coordination of international efforts in the post-war recovery and economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

To successfully implement the tasks set forth in London, it is necessary to radically alter the security situation, which has recently worsened. We are seriously concerned about the fact that the attacks of extremists from the Taliban and Al-Qaida are growing bolder and reaching into ever-larger territories. We support the broadened activities of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) authorized by Security Council. Further building the capacity of the national security forces would contribute to the speedy stabilization of the situation. That priority will ensure a stable security situation in Afghanistan in the future.

Given the increasing threat from the Taliban and Al-Qaida, strict compliance — including by the Afghan Government — with the sanctions imposed by the Security Council takes on special relevance. We share the view that the implementation of the national reconciliation programme is important for the long-term stabilization of the situation in the country. At the same time, that process should not contradict the decisions taken by the Security Council or the task of fully eradicating the terrorist threat from the territory of Afghanistan.

We note with concern that efforts by the international community and the Afghan authorities to counter the production and smuggling of drugs have not yet produced the desired results. Resolving that problem will be key in achieving success in the fight against terrorism in economic rehabilitation and in establishing stable central authority in Afghanistan. Only determined and coordinated steps by the international community and the Afghans themselves can truly put an end to the drug trafficking from Afghanistan by combining internal measures and tougher border controls and cutting off drug-trafficking channels, including through the involvement of neighbouring States. It is important that a comprehensive international strategy against the drug threat from Afghanistan be developed as soon as possible, with the participation of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan.

As a part of the efforts to create anti-drug security belts along Afghanistan's borders, the CSTO member States carried out a two-stage preventive operation, named Operation Channel, from 25 to 31 October and from 5 to 12 December 2005, with invited observers from Azerbaijan, Iran, China, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and the Ukraine. That operation has become more effective every year. This time more than 11 tons of narcotics and psychotropic substances, including half a ton of heroin and more than a ton of hashish, were confiscated. In addition, 1,030 firearms and more that 37,000 rounds of ammunition were confiscated from offenders.

Afghanistan remains one of the priorities in the work of CSTO. A working group on Afghanistan was launched under the Organization's Council of Foreign Ministers. A proposal to establish cooperation using that format was sent to the Afghan side. We regard multifaceted cooperation between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries as an important factor in promoting a comprehensive settlement. In that regard, the programme of assistance to Afghanistan should embrace neighbouring countries, possibly including through placing orders in those countries from donor countries and international organizations.

The members of the CSTO are ready to continue to contribute to the process of regional interaction in key areas of international efforts in Afghanistan, including economic rehabilitation, security and the fight against drug trafficking.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Along with other speakers, I too would like to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his very clear briefing.

The London Conference and the adoption of the Afghanistan Compact are without doubt very positive developments, as they organize the concerted efforts of Afghanistan and the international community on the basis of benchmarks and time frames in four areas, namely, security, the rule of law, development and — as an issue cutting across all those others — combating drug trafficking.

With regard to the security challenges, the most important goals of the Compact are to create Afghan armed forces numbering 74,000 troops by 2006, to disarm all illegal armed groups by 2007 and to almost fully eradicate opium cultivation by 2010.

With regard to the Compact's economic and social development goals — which, along with the security objectives, are perhaps the most important goals of the Compact — there is, among the other objectives, the desire to build national road and electricity networks by 2008. Above all, the Compact includes the goal of establishing irrigation systems between 2006 to 2010, so as to deal with the six-year drought from which Afghanistan has suffered, as well as to make it possible to find alternative crops to opium.

As I have said, all that is very positive. However, the Compact and the Government of Afghanistan face a paradoxical situation today, given the two fundamental challenges: insecurity and the trafficking in narcotic drugs. Each of those is capable of distorting every effort made by Afghans and their partners through the Compact to build a democratic and stable country.

Indeed, the Compact comes at a time of disturbing trends, such as a rise in terrorism, including more frequent suicide attacks on the Kabul authorities and more violence directed against the international forces and the educational system. Behind such attacks are insurgents and other anti-Government elements linked to terrorist groups, drug trafficking and organized crime.

However, the increase in violence by illegal armed groups or terrorists is not our sole concern. Drug trafficking continues to be a reality linked to those phenomena and its scale overshadows the political progress achieved to date. Despite efforts to establish a viable rule of law, many international analysts are venturing to assert that Afghanistan is today the best-organized drug State in the world. The Secretary-General's report states that 87 per cent of the world's opium is produced in Afghanistan and that 50 per cent of that country's gross domestic revenues are derived from drugs. Two million people are employed in that sector, transforming rural life in Afghanistan, forging alliances with terrorism, the Taliban and other warlords, and making their presence felt in the nascent Afghan political institutions.

It is vital for the opium growers to find alternative crops. Rural agriculture must be addressed as a priority and efforts to counteract six years of drought in Afghanistan must be undertaken, but drastic measures must also be taken to punish drug traffickers. If we do not wage a resolute battle to ensure that

opium-growing is essentially eradicated by 2010, our ongoing concerns will be justified. The international media are increasingly describing Afghanistan as a major exporter of heroin, in spite of the presence of international forces and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Unfortunately, that is all true and it tends to undermine national and international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. I say this because Afghanistan's accommodation with heroin is beginning to affect the legitimacy of efforts to combat drug trafficking in the Andean region and Latin America, and may do so throughout the world in the future. As in other cases before the Security Council, we must bear in mind the fact that democracy, the rule of law and citizenship cannot be established without a viable national economy that is not sustained by drug trafficking.

That is why, if the Afghanistan Compact is to achieve democracy and security for that country's citizens, a viable Afghan national economy must be established free of connections to the export of heroin and opium. If Afghanistan's economy remains addicted to heroin exports, the Compact will not work and Afghanistan will again be threatened with collapse as an ungovernable entity in the future. That would besmirch the name of democracy around the world, because democracy and heroin are incompatible.

As regards the proposed mandate for UNAMA, my delegation notes that the issue of drug trafficking is barely addressed. There may be reasons for that, but my delegation should like to suggest that it would be desirable for UNAMA to adopt the approach taken in the London Compact to prioritize support for combating drug trafficking as a cross-cutting issue in the various areas covered by its mandate.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): I want to begin by joining the Secretary-General in the tribute contained in his report to the work of Jean Arnault and warmly to welcome Tom Koenigs to the job. I personally, and my delegation and Government, look forward to working with him very closely.

I associate myself with the statement to be made by the representative of Austria later in this debate on behalf of the European Union and I want to say right at the outset that the United Kingdom fully supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for another year, including the adjustments to the mandate proposed by the Secretary-General.

Under the Bonn process, Afghanistan made really tremendous progress, as the Secretary-General's report highlights, but as that report also indicates, more remains to be done — inevitably, since this is a long-term task that is going to require sustained international commitment.

The London Conference in late January provided an opportunity for the international community to re-emphasize its commitment to Afghanistan for the next phase. The United Kingdom was proud to host the Conference and was grateful to the United Nations, and the Secretary-General in particular, for their support.

The Afghanistan Compact agreed at the Conference demonstrates the international community's firm continuing support for Afghanistan's reconstruction and also, and importantly, for increasing Afghan ownership of the process. The Compact aims to encourage and address Afghanistan's development over the next five years, with a clear set of benchmarks and goals designed to deliver reform on the ground and to show the people of Afghanistan the fruits of international cooperation. The $10.5 billion pledged at the London Conference provided encouraging evidence that the international community remains determined to underpin its political support with the practical assistance needed to achieve the Compact's ambitious goals.

We welcome the solidity of that international support for the Government and people of Afghanistan in their courageous commitment to an open society and the support that the Conference reflected for UNAMA's mission, but we do have to move quickly to maintain the momentum of the London Conference. We welcome the United Nations commitment, repeated this morning by Tom Koenigs, to playing a leading role in coordinating efforts to deliver the Compact. The United Kingdom supports the early establishment of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board to drive forward the ambitious Compact agenda.

I want to highlight just two of the numerous challenges which lie ahead.

First, with regard to security, I want to begin by recognizing UNAMA's own security concerns. Of course, improving security remains critical to the entire enterprise, particularly in the South and the East. The

phased expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is a key part of that agenda, and the United Kingdom is proud to be playing its part, with Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia and other partners, in enabling ISAF's third stage to role out in the South of the country. ISAF's core tasks do not, we believe, need to change as it expands into the South. Those tasks, of course, are helping to extend the authority of the central Government, facilitating security-sector reform and helping to create an environment in which Afghan governance and the rule of law, as well as development, can prosper.

The second challenge I want to highlight is the corrosive threat presented by the narcotics industry. Working to eliminate opium poppy cultivation, production and trafficking is absolutely vital to the long-term security, development and effective governance of Afghanistan.

None of us is under any illusion about the scale and complexity of this problem, but we do need to be clear that, unless we can provide effective support to President Karzai and his Government in their efforts to address this problem in a sustainable way, all that we and the Afghan Government and people are seeking to achieve risks being undermined.

This is a significant challenge, because sustainable drug-elimination strategies take time, particularly when the challenges are as severe as those in Afghanistan. There are no instant solutions; there are no shortcuts to success. The Afghan Government and its friends have a lot of work ahead; they, and we, are in this for the long haul.

But progress is being made. The year 2005 saw the passage of vital counter-narcotics legislation, the conviction of more than 90 traffickers, an increase in drugs-related seizures and a 21 per cent reduction in land under opium poppy cultivation.

However, the international community still needs to increase its support to help the Government of Afghanistan build on those successes and deliver on its long-term counter-narcotics goals.

My Government will be spending over 270 million pounds — that is, nearly half a billion dollars — over the next three financial years in support of the Government of Afghanistan's updated national drug control strategy. We have also helped the Government of Afghanistan to create a counter-narcotics trust fund to mobilize international donor support. That fund is central to building Afghan counter-narcotics capacity, planning and resource transparency, and we will channel over $50 million worth of counter-narcotics assistance through the fund over a three-year period.

The updated counter-narcotics strategy, which was presented at the London Conference, represents a more sophisticated approach to counter-narcotics. We believe that the focus on the four key priorities — targeting the trafficker, strengthening livelihoods, reducing demand and developing effective institutions — will help to make a greater impact on the trade. Finally, on counter-narcotics, the United Kingdom is also supporting the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics in its efforts to mainstream counter-narcotics activities within the Government of Afghanistan's overall national development strategy.

The drugs trade is not an isolated, self-contained problem. Tackling it will require substantial progress across the broader reconstruction effort. The inclusion of counter-narcotics as a cross-cutting theme in the Afghanistan Compact and in the Government of Afghanistan's Interim National Development Strategy recognizes the need for a broad-based approach to the problem.

The London Conference sent a clear signal that the international community will not desert Afghanistan; and, by extending UNAMA's mandate, we reinforce that message and underline the centrality of the role of the United Nations in this task.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, the initiative that you have taken to include this debate on our agenda gives us an opportunity to underscore the need for urgent international assistance for restoring peace and normalcy in Afghanistan and for rebuilding that country, devastated by war and terrorist acts, which we deeply deplore. My delegation appreciates the high quality of the report of the Secretary-General that was issued to this end, and we thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, his Special Representative, for having verbally presented it. Thus we have an overall view of developments in Afghanistan following the completion of the implementation of the Bonn Agreement, which marks the end of the political transition in that country.

The international community and the Security Council in particular have welcomed the positive

developments in the political process under way in Afghanistan. The legislative elections held in September 2005, which put in place an Afghan legislative council, following the election of the President of the republic, represent meaningful progress in the building of a democratic, peaceful, united and prosperous Afghanistan. This process was bolstered by the holding of the international London Conference on 31 January 2006, which launched the Afghanistan Compact, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1659 (2006). Today, the international community pins great hopes on the implementation of the outcome of that Conference, which has provided the country with an Interim National Development Strategy, a true framework laying out policies and programmes for rebuilding the country over the next five years.

Indeed, the Afghanistan Compact, an ambitious plan directed by the Afghan Government itself, with the assistance of the international community, looks to be an appropriate response to the tremendous challenges facing that country. It gives priority to issues of security, the rule of law and governance, development and reconstruction, and to the thorny issue of drugs. It is encouraging that this plan includes benchmarks and well-defined time frames and goals to be achieved in terms of results. Indeed, the implementation of the Compact greatly depends on the generosity of Afghanistan's international partners and on the pledges made by participants in the London Conference, totalling more than $10.5 billion, which bodes well for this process.

This is an opportunity for my delegation to reaffirm, yet again, that the international community must demonstrate the same spirit of generosity with respect to countries involved in reconstruction efforts following armed conflicts. Similarly, my delegation believes that, from this standpoint, the key and impartial role of the United Nations must be reaffirmed in terms of coordinating efforts to implement the Compact. As such, we welcome the United Nations presence, through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), whose mandate expires on 24 March 2006 and is to be renewed for a further period of 12 months, in accordance with the Secretary-General's proposal. We appreciate the advisory role to be played by UNAMA in the strategic and political fields, working with the Afghan authorities and their international partners, in its role as co-chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. Similarly, it must provide assistance at the local level for people in Afghanistan, while taking into account threats to the security and safety of United Nations personnel. From that standpoint, it is necessary to give UNAMA additional and sufficient security-related resources, particularly by guaranteeing it air support in cases of medical emergency, for instance. As such, the role of UNAMA, which is already essential, will become even more pivotal, given the considerable challenges Afghanistan will face in the area of reconstruction and in terms of security.

The problem of security is a central issue in Afghanistan. The prevailing insecurity translates into near-daily acts of indiscriminate violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups, such as the Taliban or supporters of Al-Qaida, drug traffickers, extremists with sectarian motives, as well as large-scale banditry, and the list goes on. It is therefore urgent that, together, the Afghan Government — whose role is essential — and the international community, under the leadership of the United Nations, particularly of UNAMA, find solutions to security-related challenges by training and increasing the number of the National Army forces; carrying out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations and disbanding illegal armed groups; taking over the training of the police; strengthening the judicial system; reducing poverty; and fighting resolutely to eradicate poppy cultivation and the corruption fuelled by money from the drug trade.

We emphasize, however, that addressing the issue of security in Afghanistan is a key element of the entire process. Therefore, any development effort would be profoundly undermined if the central issue of security is not appropriately addressed.

In conclusion, my delegation pays tribute to the courage and self-sacrifice of the international personnel in Afghanistan, including those of the International Security Assistance Force, for the remarkable work accomplished in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions. We believe that this Security Council debate amply shows the need for the presence and solidarity that should be clearly demonstrated by the international community in Afghanistan and for the sake of the Afghan people.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to welcome Mr. Tom Koenigs,

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and to thank him for his presence among us and for his briefing to the Council. I wish him every success in his mission.

The international community has made much progress towards the political and economic stabilization of Afghanistan and in the area of security. To date, that process has gone through several important phases, beginning with the Berlin Declaration of 1 April 2004 — the cornerstone of the process — and then the London Conference on Afghanistan, held in January, resulting in the Afghanistan Compact. The Compact provides a framework for action aimed at effective coordination and cooperation between the international community and the Afghan Government over the next five years in order to continue the rebuilding of Afghanistan and the consolidation of peace in the country with the support of international donors.

Qatar reaffirms its position of principle, which is based on the need to work to establish stability in Afghanistan while guaranteeing its national unity and full sovereignty. Qatar also reaffirms its support for the Afghan people and their readiness to work together with the international community to attain those objectives.

Thus, on 28 February 2006, Qatar hosted the Second Doha Conference on Border Management in Afghanistan, in collaboration with the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Conference concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on Border Management in Afghanistan. However, because the Declaration was adopted after the drafting of the Secretary-General's report, the report does not mention that international Conference, which saw the participation of 26 countries, in addition to the United Nations, the European Union, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, NATO and neighbouring countries. The Conference sought to strengthen the cooperation among the countries of the region to establish police services and manage border security, while supporting Afghanistan in its fight against narcotics, including by strengthening border controls and the monitoring of roads leading to crossing points.

The Doha Declaration welcomes the measures taken to strengthen and deepen the cooperation among the region's countries through the signing of memorandums of understanding among Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and China with the support of the international community.

While it is true that tangible progress has been made in Afghanistan in the area of the practice of democracy and respect for human rights, there are still a number of deficiencies that must be addressed carefully. For example, in his report (S/2006/145), the Secretary-General takes note of the deplorable situation of the prison system, whose structure requires thorough reform and control of human rights violations.

The next phase in peacebuilding in Afghanistan will require a greater focus on economic development, on rebuilding and rehabilitating the infrastructure and on reducing poppy cultivation. In fact, narcotics smuggling has grown alarmingly in recent years: more than 85 per cent of the global poppy production comes from in Afghanistan. According to statistics, that production has increased further since the beginning of the year.

Therefore, we must do our utmost to reduce and eliminate drug smuggling and poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, without overlooking the need to improve health care and education services. Those are also crucial factors for preserving security and stability in Afghanistan.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played a significant role in safeguarding stability and establishing an atmosphere conducive to economic stability and security in order to help the Afghan people develop successfully. UNAMA continues to play a central role in that regard. Therefore, we believe that the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report are extremely useful and should increase UNAMA's effectiveness in carrying out its mandate. We thus favour extending UNAMA's mandate for a 12-month period.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing.

Last month, my delegation joined other members of the Security Council in hailing the Afghanistan Compact, which built upon the Bonn Agreement as a model of peacebuilding for fragmented societies emerging from internecine conflict. We have noted that the Compact is an ambitious five-year programme built

on four pillars — namely, governance, security, counter-narcotics efforts, reconstruction and development — which will need our support to be implemented. Clearly, when the international community is united in mind and purpose, there is hardly any challenge that we cannot meet, including working together to prevent the outbreak of such costly and energy-sapping conflicts.

The latest report submitted by the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2006/145) highlights the tremendous progress that has been made in laying the foundation for a functioning democratic State based on tolerance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, all underpinned by a vibrant economy.

We note, at the same time, that progress has been rather slow in tackling the huge and interrelated problems of governance and security. In particular, my delegation deplores the wanton killings resulting from reckless acts of terror by remnants of extremist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaida and other armed bandits bent on undermining progress towards peace and stability in Afghanistan. It is, indeed, worrisome to note that the operational tempo and tactical sophistication of the insurgents and other anti-Government elements have continued to develop, and that now the four principal threats are improvised explosive devices, suicide bombings, kidnapping and attacks on the education system.

Nonetheless, we are confident that the coalition forces and the Afghan security forces will succeed in suppressing the elements engaged in destabilizing the country. We take this opportunity to call on the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan to iron out whatever differences they have and to cooperate in improving security along their common border to their mutual benefit.

In the same vein, we wish to underscore the grave dangers posed to the reconstruction process by the opium trade, which reportedly accounts for over 50 per cent of Afghanistan's gross domestic revenues and appears to be the lifeblood of criminal gangs and illegal armed groups. We urge the Afghan Ministry of Counter-Narcotics to redouble its efforts to end the role of Afghanistan as the world's largest supplier of opium, to say nothing of the fate of the large number of Afghans who are habitual drug users.

In this regard, we welcome the positive role of the coalition forces and the steady progress being made by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan (UNAMA), in collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, to extend their control beyond Kabul. Needless to say, the vision of the Afghan Compact can be realized only in a safe and secure environment. My delegation wishes, therefore, to salute those countries that have been at the forefront of the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, notably the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Japan and several others, as well as, of course, UNAMA, United Nations agencies and various non-governmental organizations.

Another area of great concern is the human rights situation. As stated in the report, this is mainly attributable to the fragile security situation and weaknesses in governance. It is disheartening to note that women in Afghanistan continue to face serious restrictions in the exercise of their rights, including those that affect their freedom of movement and access to education, as well as widespread discrimination and pervasive violence, which also affect young girls. Worse still, justice is beyond the reach of most Afghan women.

Unless impunity is checked, factional commanders, officials of the security agencies and former warlords will continue to make arbitrary arrests and engage in illegal detention and torture without being held accountable. That is why it is imperative that the adoption of the national Action Plan on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation be accorded the highest priority and that the Plan be vigorously implemented so as to minimize human rights abuses.

Given the nature of the challenges that Afghanistan currently faces, Ghana supports the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report aimed at consolidating and tightening up the activities of the United Nations agencies under the umbrella of UNAMA.

In March 2002, when UNAMA was established by Security Council resolution 1401 (2002), its mandate focused mainly on the promotion of national reconciliation and reconstruction, as well as on humanitarian relief within the framework of the Bonn Agreement. While the objectives of the Bonn process have largely been achieved, the fact is that formidable challenges remain, particularly with the adoption of the Afghanistan Compact.

It is obvious, therefore, that UNAMA has to be realigned in terms of its mandate and structure so as to enhance its ability to meet the new challenges. We therefore support the Secretary-General's request for an extension of the mandate of UNAMA for a further period of 12 months to enable it continue to provide political and strategic guidance to the Afghan leadership and its international partners as they embark on the ambitious and vital next phase of State-building.

Having come thus far, it is important for us to work together in ensuring that the fount of goodwill that has sustained Afghanistan since the Bonn process was launched continues to flow uninterrupted.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should now like to make a statement on behalf of Argentina.

First of all, I would like to join the other members of the Security Council in thanking Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for his excellent and comprehensive briefing.

Argentina concurs with the main conclusions and observations in the Secretary-General's report, especially as regards the achievements in Afghanistan during the past four years and the numerous challenges that lie ahead. We believe that in order to consolidate the institutions established by the Bonn process and to continue to normalize the situation in the country, the continuous assistance of the international community is needed in several areas. The Afghanistan Compact, signed in London, clearly identifies the various aspects of that ambitious peacebuilding agenda for the next five years, especially in the areas of security; governance; the rule of law and human rights; economic and social development; and combating narcotics. Even though the Afghan Government and the Afghan people themselves must take the leadership in all of those fields, the international community also has an important role to play.

I would like take this opportunity to briefly refer to five issues.

The first is the security situation, which continues to be a cause for great concern. The south and south-east of Afghanistan continue to be the scene of a large number of violent incidents, and the fact that armed groups are using increasingly sophisticated methods is a particular cause for concern. The finalization of the political process does not seem to have had the positive impact in the security area for which all of us were hoping. Given that the Afghan forces are not yet in a position to deal with that challenge, we believe that the international community must continue to provide assistance in the security area. We therefore welcome the adoption by NATO of a new operational plan that would also cover the south of the country.

In our view, a second main challenge is combating narcotics. The Afghan economy continues to be dominated by the production of and traffic in opium, which accounts for 50 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Thus far, the efforts undertaken have yielded only modest results, especially as regards the eradication of poppy cultivation. We therefore support the adoption of an integrated strategy, such as that presented in London. We should not lose sight of the fact that adopting laws and presenting plans is not sufficient in itself; the key lies in their implementation. The Afghan Government must take decisive leadership on this issue, and the international community must continue to provide assistance.

The third issue is the human rights situation, which is also a cause for concern. We believe that impunity for certain leaders of armed groups accused of grave human rights violations — some of whom have been elected to the Wolesi Jirga and hold public office — is unacceptable. We would like to request the Secretariat to provide us, in the near future, with more detailed information about the national Action Plan on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation adopted in December. We hope that the search for reconciliation, important though it is, will not be carried out at the expense of justice, and that impunity will not ultimately prevail.

The fourth issue is the fight against terrorism linked to Al-Qaida and the Taliban. In my capacity as the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), I should like to reaffirm our readiness to assist the Government of Afghanistan in all aspects of the implementation of the sanctions regime established by the Security Council with a view to being able to apply the Committee's established procedures so as to resolve anomalous situations that, in the view of the Government of Afghanistan, have arisen with regard to people included on the Committee's list.

Lastly, with regard to the future presence of the United Nations in Afghanistan, generally speaking and as I stated earlier, my delegation supports the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. We agree that UNAMA's mandate should be extended for 12 months, with some adjustments, with the aim of assisting the Afghan people and Government in the next phase of the peacebuilding process. With that goal in mind, we shall once again participate constructively in the negotiations that will take place in the Security Council in the coming days.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Before proceeding, I should like to say that, in an effort to optimize the use of our time and allow as many delegations as possible to take the floor, I shall not individually invite speakers to take seats at the table or to resume their seats at the side of the Chamber. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will escort the next speaker on the list to the table. I thank participants for their understanding and cooperation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Afghanistan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): At the outset, I should like to congratulate, you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I very much appreciate your personal knowledge of the Afghan situation. I also wish to pay tribute to Ambassador John Bolton of the United States, your predecessor, for the excellent manner in which he led the work of the Council during the month of February.

The Afghan delegation wishes to join previous speakers in extending a warm welcome to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, on his first briefing to the Council since he assumed leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We also commend the Special Representative for his comprehensive briefing on recent developments pertaining to the situation in Afghanistan. We wish him continued success in carrying out his duties.

Just over a month ago, representatives of more than 75 countries and international organizations gathered in London to convene the international Conference on Afghanistan, at which the international community and the Government of Afghanistan agreed on a new form of engagement beyond the Bonn process. In adopting the Afghanistan Compact, Afghanistan and its international partners renewed their commitments to achieve sustainable progress in key areas of security; governance; the rule of law and human rights; and social and economic development. Afghanistan is grateful to the international community for having pledged, in London, financial assistance amounting to $10.5 billion for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. The generosity displayed by the international community in London is a clear indication of the international community's sustained commitment to the development and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

With the presentation of the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy at the London Conference, the Government of Afghanistan has provided a clear and comprehensive blueprint for the implementation of the Compact. For its part, the Government of Afghanistan stands ready to fulfil its responsibility towards achieving the objectives of the Afghan National Development Strategy. In that respect, I am pleased to inform the Council that the Afghan Government recently appointed the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance and Economy, as well as the National Security Adviser, to serve on the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). The Board's work will be conducted under the chairmanship of Professor Ishaq Nadiri, senior economic adviser to President Karzai.

Afghanistan continues to make significant progress towards the establishment and consolidation of its State institutions. Allow me to briefly refer to some of the positive developments that have transpired since the Council's previous open debate on the situation in Afghanistan, which took place on 23 August 2005.

Perhaps the most significant development has been the formation of Afghanistan's National Assembly and provincial councils. Subsequent to the inauguration of both houses of parliament, representatives elected their respective chairmen and adopted the rules of procedure for the Assembly. Women hold 27 per cent of the 249 seats allocated to the people's house. Furthermore, 121 women were elected to provincial councils. Both branches of the legislative body are now operational and have engaged

in lively debates on issues relating to national security and to the political, economic and social development of the country. In accordance with a constitutional provision, the people's house of the National Assembly is now preparing to cast a vote of confidence on the Cabinet.

The Afghan Government continues to make progress in enhancing the capacity of the security institutions. The Afghan national army and national police are engaged in joint combat operations with international forces to secure peace, stability and public order. Having successfully concluded the disarmament and demobilization process, the Afghan Government remains committed to achieve the final phase of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process of former combatants. In addition, considerable progress has been made with regard to the disbandment of illegal armed groups.

Despite the successful implementation of the Bonn Agreement, much remains to be accomplished in order to overcome the remaining challenges confronting Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan remains concerned about the ongoing terrorist activities of the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremists groups, particularly in the south and south-east of the country. Such attacks not only terrorize the Afghan people in their daily lives, but also jeopardize the noble task of achieving the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. In that context, I would like to refer to the previous report of the Secretary-General, dated 12 August 2005, in which he stated:

> "It is time for the security situation to be addressed resolutely ... The insurgency's sources of funding, training and safe havens must also be effectively addressed" (*S/2005/525, para. 82*).

We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General has once again reiterated that assessment in paragraph 66 of his recent report.

The heinous suicide attack of 12 March 2006 on the life of Mr. Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, Chairman of the Upper House of the National Assembly, was yet another desperate attempt by the enemies of Afghanistan to destabilize the situation in the country. Mr. Mojededdi escaped from the attack, but let me seize this opportunity to state that the practice of suicide attacks has been virtually unknown in Afghan history. Even during the years of resistance against foreign occupations, the people of Afghanistan never resorted to that abhorrent practice. It is therefore evident that the phenomenon has come to Afghanistan from abroad. In that respect, allow me to also to state that such activities will not hinder the resolve of the Afghan people in their quest for a peaceful, stable and democratic Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government is of the conviction that the threat posed by extremist and obscurantist groups is not limited to Afghanistan. Rather, it remains a threat to the peace, prosperity and development of the region. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the fight against terrorism receive the sincere and honest commitment of all the countries in the region. We acknowledge the vital contribution of the international coalition forces and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in the effort to enhance the security situation in Afghanistan. In that context, we welcome the phased expansion of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force to the South and East of the country.

The cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs are yet another challenge facing Afghanistan. In that regard, the Afghan Government acknowledges the magnitude of that threat to the stability of the country and remains resolved to tackle the issue.

In recognition of our responsibility to eradicate the illicit cultivation and production of illicit drugs, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan presented its updated national drug control strategy at the London Conference on Afghanistan. The comprehensive strategy encompasses the following key pillars: the fight against drug trafficking, assistance to farmers through alternative livelihoods, drug demand reduction, and institution-building at the central and provincial levels.

Furthermore, the Afghan Government also adopted a new counter-narcotics law in December 2005, establishing the Central Narcotics Tribunal to prosecute drug traffickers and those associated with the production and cultivation of illicit drugs. In order to achieve the objectives of the national drug control strategy, we reiterate the need for the enhanced coordination and cooperation of the countries of the region and the international community with Afghanistan.

We have mentioned on numerous occasions before this Council and the General Assembly that high priority should be accorded to the social and economic development of Afghanistan. Progress in terms of social and economic development will have a direct impact on the overall security situation, given the interconnection between development and security.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the continued support of the international community and the United Nations for Afghanistan is vital to the full implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. We extend our appreciation and gratitude to all countries and international and regional organizations for the support rendered to Afghanistan. Finally, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of my delegation to Mr. Jean Arnault, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his dedicated service and contribution to the consolidation of peace, security and development in Afghanistan. We are also certain that Mr. Tom Koenigs will successfully and ably continue those endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Millar (Australia): Australia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan of 7 March and supports the renewal of and proposed adjustments to the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). That includes the continued political and good offices role for UNAMA in Afghanistan, such as its efforts to assist in the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact agreed at the London Conference on Afghanistan, which the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer, attended. Australia also supports UNAMA's continued humanitarian and development coordination efforts.

The Afghanistan Compact, signed at the London Conference on Afghanistan held on 31 January and 1 February, provides a clear and agreed strategic framework for the next phase of reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Australia applauds the completion of the process set out in the Bonn Agreement and welcomes the Compact's focus on Afghan leadership of the next phase, clear benchmarking of activities, and the ongoing political and financial support pledged by the international community at the Conference. That support includes Australia's latest commitment of up to $150 million over the next five years, which follows the $110 million Australia had committed since 2001 and which is now fully disbursed.

Australia remains concerned about the damage done in Afghanistan by years of conflict. We share the concern of the Secretary-General at the many issues that present challenges to the short- and longer-term stability and security of Afghanistan that have not yet been resolved. In his earlier reports to the Council, the Secretary-General expressed concern at the increasing trends in violence and challenges to State authority.

But alongside those worrying trends are outcomes of great promise. Significant among those are the Afghan National Assembly Lower House elections, held on 18 September 2005, in which some 6.4 million Afghans took part; the inauguration of the National Assembly on 19 December and the associated commencement of parliamentary debate and business; the agreement on 26 January between the Afghan Government and international partners on a national Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups strategy; the ongoing reform and rebuilding of the police and army; and the Afghan Government's counter-narcotics programme, the success of which will be crucial to longer-term stability and good governance.

Australia agrees with the Secretary-General that the human rights situation remains challenging and encourages the Afghan Government to continue its efforts in this area so as to meet domestic and international commitments fully.

Australia remains fully committed to playing its part in the efforts of the international community to support the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Alongside our further financial commitment of 150 million Australian dollars, Australia has also recently announced an additional military deployment of up to 200 personnel as a contribution to a provincial reconstruction team. This is in addition to our current Special Forces Task Group and aviation support element, which includes two CH-47 helicopters. In the context of today's debate, we are also proud to note that we provide direct support to UNAMA through the provision of an Australian Defence Force officer as a military adviser to UNAMA.

Australia will continue to support Afghanistan's transition from conflict to peace and democracy. We congratulate the United Nations on its efforts to date and agree that the proposed adjustments will allow

UNAMA, in providing support to the Government and people of Afghanistan, to meet better the challenges ahead.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the countries aligning themselves with this statement.

Afghanistan has achieved considerable progress over the past four years in partnership with the international community. The political transition process, as set out in the Bonn Agreement, has been successfully completed with the inauguration of the Afghan National Assembly on 19 December 2005.

It is now vital to deepen and consolidate the progress achieved so far. With the major political State institutions now in place in the centre, it is important that those institutions extend their capacity to provide, in an efficient manner, security and essential public services to the population throughout the country.

Another milestone was the launching of the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference on Afghanistan on 31 January and 1 February 2006. The European Union welcomes the Afghanistan Compact on the basis of partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community, with a central and impartial coordinating role for the United Nations. The Compact is based on Afghan priorities and thus ensures Afghan ownership. This is in line with the European Union's longstanding support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of an Afghanistan that is accountable to its citizens, able to assume its rightful place in the international community and to contribute to regional stability.

The European Union fully supports all three pillars of activity identified by the Compact: security; governance, rule of law and human rights; and sustainable economic and social development, as well as the cross-cutting priority of counter-narcotics.

We remain committed to long-term support for the efforts of the Afghan Government, and of the people of Afghanistan in each of these areas, and we will further enhance the effectiveness of our action. The EU-Afghanistan Joint Declaration of 16 November 2005 is a clear expression of this intent. Our assistance will be aimed mainly at fostering the establishment of a democratic, accountable and sustainable Afghan State — one capable of exercising its sovereignty and protecting the rights of its citizens, while stressing Afghan ownership in the process. We will build upon our already extensive engagement in the political, security, development and humanitarian fields, and we will ensure that counter-narcotics is mainstreamed throughout activities in each of these areas.

The challenges of the phase following the successful completion of the Bonn process call for deepening and consolidating the progress achieved so far. Counter-narcotics will remain a cross-cutting priority in our overall EU policy towards Afghanistan. We will sustain and increase our efforts in support of the priorities highlighted in the Government of Afghanistan's national drug control strategy. More specifically, we will support the development of strong and effective counter-narcotics institutions, law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, including through the provision of mentors and trainers, and will provide financial support for efforts by the Afghan Government to strengthen and diversify sustainable opportunities for leading rural livelihoods.

The human rights situation remains a cause for concern, in particular with regard to women and children. The EU will continue to give priority to this issue. We welcome the efforts put into drafting an interim national action plan for women in Afghanistan. This document will be a vital instrument to promote the participation of women and ensure their rightful place in Afghan public life.

In the context of continued efforts to end the culture of impunity and to promote reconciliation, the EU regards transnational justice as a crucial component. Equally important, we will continue to support the strengthening of a viable Afghan civil society as a way of consolidating democracy in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the European Union will pay special attention to governance and administrative reform and anti-corruption strategies, including at the provincial level, and to promoting human rights and the rule of law.

We will increase financial support for reform of the justice sector at both the central and provincial levels. In that regard, we will directly support provincial reconstruction team civilian activities, led by EU member States, which will include activities focused on the rule of law and good governance at the provincial level.

The security situation also remains a cause for concern and continues to undermine reconstruction efforts outside the cities. We will increase support for security sector reform, including by providing training and increased financial support for the creation of an effective and sustainable Afghan national police force, and by making available a further contribution to support the disarmament and reintegration of former combatants.

The European Union welcomes the Doha Declaration on Border Management in Afghanistan and the Declaration on Closer Cooperation on border police, both agreed in Doha on 28 February.

European Union member States continue to play their substantial role in supplying military and civilian resources to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

The European Union will continue to support Afghanistan's sustainable economic and social development and its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We will provide assistance within the framework of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the Afghanistan Compact. Programmes and projects will be coordinated with the Afghan Government in order to ensure that they are consistent with its priorities and that donor activities are rationalized.

The EU will provide assistance directly through the budget and will continue to encourage the Afghan Government to reach greater financial self-sustainability.

I would like to conclude by stressing that the European Union looks forward to continued close cooperation with the rest of the international community, drawing on the Afghanistan Compact and the EU-Afghanistan Joint Declaration as frameworks for our cooperation. The European Union supports the continued central role of the United Nations, including in the monitoring and coordination of donor activities by the international community.

In that context, the European Union welcomes the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his latest report on Afghanistan (S/2006/145) regarding the future mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. UNAMA will thus continue the important role it has had in the past in the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. However, progress is dependent on long-term political commitment on the part of all stakeholders, both in Afghanistan and among members of the international community.

The European Union will continue to closely coordinate its actions and programmes with the United Nations, its agencies and other relevant international organizations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I would like at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and for giving us the opportunity to participate in the discussion on the situation in Afghanistan. I would also like to thank Mr. Koenigs for presenting the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/145).

We agree with those speakers who stated this morning that significant progress has been made towards building a democratic State in Afghanistan and towards the rehabilitation of the country's basic infrastructure. The signing of the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference, held on 31 January and 1 February, marks an important milestone on the road towards the reconstruction and the normalcy of Afghanistan. It reaffirms the commitment of the Afghan Government and of the international community to collaborate in meeting the challenges of security, governance and economic and social development.

The report of the Secretary-General reminds us, however, of the challenges remaining in Afghanistan. Increased activity by insurgents and terrorists, who have used more sophisticated and lethal tactics, is of great concern. Understandably, much remains to be done as regards strengthening the rule of law, improving respect for human rights and the practice of good governance. The production and trafficking of and trade in illegal narcotics continue to be a threat to the success of State-building in Afghanistan. That is both a national and international concern, as it provides fertile ground for criminal networks, illegal armed groups and extremist elements. We commend the comprehensive efforts already carried out and new plans of the Afghan Government, of which my Afghan colleague spoke a few minutes ago. We also commend Afghanistan's international partners in the fight against drug cultivation and the drug trade.

With regard to human rights in Afghanistan, I would simply like to align myself with what my colleague from Austria said on behalf of the European Union on that subject. The interim National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan is an especially encouraging work in progress.

Peacekeeping missions enable a small country such as Iceland to join in international efforts for peace and development. We are currently contributing a mobile observation team to a provincial reconstruction team in western Afghanistan. Previously, Iceland was responsible for administrative command and other tasks at Kabul International Airport, beginning in mid-2004 and into 2005. It has now been decided that, beginning this spring, Iceland will again provide personnel in support of Kabul airport operations. At the request of the Afghan authorities and NATO, Iceland has also produced a plan for how to transition, in three to four years, the operation of the airport from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghan civilian management. Iceland will assist in implementing the transition plan by providing expert advice and support, in close cooperation with other international organizations. Finally, on a number of occasions, since late 2001, Iceland has provided airlifts for the transport of peacekeeping forces, military equipment and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

Iceland continues to be committed to helping establish conditions in which Afghanistan can enjoy a representative Government and self-sustaining peace and security, as well as to the successful reconstruction of the country. Iceland fully supports the important work carried out to that end by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and by other international organizations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Germany.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate on Afghanistan, prior to the revision and renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

As on previous occasions, I would like to take the floor today to make comments additional to the policy statement made by the presidency of the European Union, with which we fully align ourselves.

In addition, I would like to thank Jean Arnault for the work he carried out in his previous position and to welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Tom Koenigs, who addressed the Security Council today for the first time in his capacity as head of UNAMA. We thank him for his comprehensive report and wish him every success in his work.

We would like to express our appreciation for the latest report of the Secretary-General on developments in Afghanistan and on the future work plans for the United Nations following the launching of the Afghanistan Compact in London earlier this year (S/2006/145).

The Compact is a solid and promising basis for Afghanistan and for the international community when we look at the challenges of the post-Bonn era until 2010. We are confident that progress will be achieved by consolidating Afghan institutions and by mastering the key challenges of security, good governance, the rule of law, economic and social development and — as a cross-cutting priority that has been mentioned by many previous speakers — the fight against the narcotics industry. The substantial pledges made at the London Conference demonstrated the readiness of the international community towards a long-term commitment in Afghanistan. In our view, rebuilding Afghanistan has been a successful example of what can be achieved through a coordinated and sustained multilateral approach. In that respect, the United Nations will continue to have a decisive role.

For Germany, Afghanistan will remain a priority in its worldwide engagement. Our bilateral financial commitment from 2002 until 2010 will amount to more than $1 billion. We are also prepared to relieve Afghanistan of old debts within the framework of the Paris Club.

We agree with the observations made in the Secretary-General's report, including those on the paramount importance of security. Therefore, Germany will remain strongly involved in the security sector through our lead role in police reform, through support for the disbandment of illegal armed groups by the provincial reconstruction teams under our responsibility, and by providing the largest military contingent to the International Security Assistance Force until Britain replaces us in that role.

Let me add that at the end of February, the Governments of Afghanistan and Germany jointly organized another major conference on police reform in Doha, generously hosted by the State of Qatar. The conference focused on police reform and border management in a regional perspective. We believe that a functioning police force in Afghanistan will have a key role in providing security, fighting crime and drug trafficking and protecting borders in cooperation with neighbouring States.

At Doha, Afghanistan and its neighbours created the basis for joint regional border management. Two declarations were adopted — the Doha Declaration on Border Management, which takes a regional approach, and the Declaration on Closer Cooperation on Border Police, within the framework of the Kabul Declaration and the reconstruction of the police of Afghanistan. In addition, pledges of up to $38 million were made available for police reform in Afghanistan. The Doha conference was a step towards meeting the relevant benchmark of the Compact.

The United Nations will continue to play a central role in Afghanistan, as of now on the basis of the Afghanistan Compact. We welcome this role and the functions and the structure of UNAMA outlined in the Secretary-General's report. We reiterate Germany's support for United Nations activities in Kabul, as well as throughout the country. We wish the United Nations and, in particular, UNAMA and Mr. Koenigs, success in their future work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Let me also extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan and for the untiring commitment and determination demonstrated by him and his colleagues to consolidate peace, stability and development in the country. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Tom Koenigs, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, thank him for his briefing and assure him of our continued support and cooperation in helping the people and the Government of Afghanistan to realize their long-awaited aspirations for peace, stability and development.

We have noted with delight that over the past few months the political transition envisaged under the Bonn Agreement has been completed through the election and inauguration of the Afghan National Assembly, and that a new phase in the history of Afghanistan has started with the Afghanistan Compact, launched at the London Conference in January this year. Indeed, the completion of the Bonn process, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, has resulted in significant political accomplishments and promising improvements in the economic and social fields. These include, in particular, continued progress in public administration and the national education system, as well as achievements in the financial and fiscal fields. The report of the Secretary-General depicts a promising future for Afghanistan, saying that, in a little over four years, Afghanistan has made significant progress towards becoming a democratic State with accountable institutions and towards reconstructing the basic infrastructure that can support the economic and social development of the country.

In this context, the Government of Afghanistan has taken the lead in developing the framework that will guide the social and economic development processes essential for consolidating the gains of the Bonn process. It has developed a report on the Millennium Development Goals and adapted the Millennium Development Goals to the Afghan context, while including a ninth goal on enhancing security. Indeed, the Afghanistan Compact, together with the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy, provide an important opportunity to ensure that the Government of Afghanistan and the international community work together on a common plan towards shared objectives in the fields of security, governance and development.

Despite those remarkable accomplishments, much remains to be done, and many issues that present challenges to the short- and longer-term security and stability of Afghanistan are yet to be addressed adequately and resolved. We concur with the Secretary-General that many achievements of the past four years remain fragile and that the capacity of the foundations of the State should be strengthened so as to deliver to the Afghans the basic services they require in order to improve their daily lot.

Sadly, insecurity and the pervasive drug economy remain foremost among the challenges facing Afghanistan. We share the concern of the Secretary-General about the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan, especially through the increased employment of more sophisticated and lethal tactics, attacks against soft targets, suicide bombings, kidnappings and attacks against the education system. We strongly condemn all of those terrorist acts, which target the security and development of Afghanistan and the larger region.

It is alarming that, despite the ever-increasing presence of foreign forces in the country, anti-Government elements appear to have expanded their theatre of operations and violence into traditionally calmer areas of the west, north and north-east of the country. Undoubtedly, expediting the full expansion of the central Government's authority to the whole of the country and handing over the responsibility for the country's security to the national army and police are essential steps towards mitigating the threat of insecurity in Afghanistan.

The unabated operation of the narcotics industry poses a major threat to the achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan and adversely affects the political and economic reconstruction of the country. It also endangers the security and stability of the region, especially that of the neighbouring countries. As noted in the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and in the report of the Secretary-General, Afghanistan produces 87 per cent of the world's opium. This pervasive and thriving economy has provided fertile ground for criminal networks, corruption, insecurity and terrorism in Afghanistan and beyond.

We support the sincere steps that the Afghan Government has taken thus far to contain the threat of narcotic drugs. Nevertheless, we believe that much more needs to be done. The magnitude of the drug trade and the immense wealth that it generates, as well as the multifaceted threat that it poses, suggest that combating it will require more concerted and resolute efforts on the part of the Government of Afghanistan and a more responsible approach by the international community, particularly by those with a broad-based military presence in Afghanistan.

Moreover, while certain efforts by the Government of Afghanistan have resulted in the reduction of opium cultivation in some regions traditionally known for producing opium, unfortunately opium production has increased throughout the whole country and particularly in the regions bordering Iran.

Notwithstanding our extensive and costly campaign against that menace, we have, unfortunately, witnessed over the past year an increase in drug trafficking emanating from Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran, located on the smuggling route from Afghanistan to Europe in the north and west and to the Persian Gulf and beyond in the south has endured much more than its share in fighting a costly and deadly war against heavily armed drug traffickers in the course of the past 25 years, losing more than 3,400 law enforcement personnel and sustaining huge material losses. We have cooperated with the international community in fighting opium cultivation in Afghanistan and have helped to promote and implement crop-substitution projects in different parts of the country. For my country, which stands at the forefront of the worldwide war against drugs, international support, especially the cooperation of Afghanistan and other neighbouring countries, is essential.

By pledging $560 million for the reconstruction of Afghanistan at the Tokyo Conference — the highest pledge in terms of the per capita income of the donor countries — the Islamic Republic of Iran is earnestly endeavouring to contribute to Afghanistan's reconstruction and development process. In fulfilment of its pledge, Iran has been engaged in various infrastructural, educational and technical activities in Afghanistan, including road construction, manpower training, electricity projects, the building of schools and vocational centres, the provision of humanitarian services and many other projects. In general, Iran's contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan has so far amounted to more than $210 million. Furthermore, Iran has incurred huge costs during the past three decades by hosting almost 3 million Afghan refugees. We hope that the new conditions in Afghanistan will facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their home country in a more timely and promising manner. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in line with its long-established policy of supporting the Afghan people and Government, attended the recent London Conference and the conferences in Kabul and Doha at a very high level.

The international community, with the United Nations at the forefront, should continue its support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan in a coordinated manner as they implement the Afghanistan Compact. We are of the view that the leadership role of the Afghan Government and its ownership of the political, security and economic fields in their entirety, should be given the highest priority.

In addition, the continuation of the United Nations central role in Afghanistan is indispensable if the country is to gain from the new Compact and to build upon the accomplishments of the Bonn process. As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, UNAMA has completed its task with respect to the Bonn Agreement, but its role does not end there. We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the mandate of UNAMA as outlined in the report.

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate that my Government will continue with its unwavering resolve to help the Afghan Government and people in their endeavour for peace, stability and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): Like others, I too would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary General Tom Koenigs for his briefing.

I would also like to associate myself with the statement delivered by Mr. Andrey Denisov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

I join my colleagues in commending the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on different aspects of the situation in Afghanistan (S/2006/145). We agree in particular with the idea in that report that the situation requires sustained attention in order to strengthen ties between Afghanistan and its neighbours.

Viewing Afghanistan as an integral part of Central Asia, Kazakhstan welcomes its positive achievements in the political, social and economic spheres and its involvement in regional affairs. We are strongly committed to continuing to contribute our share to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, in partnership with the Afghan authorities and the international community.

At the same time, the security situation in Afghanistan is under pressure from the rising level of insurgent attacks, particularly in the south-east and south-west of the country. In that regard, the International Security Assistance Force and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) are playing an important role on the ground. We fully support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate, as well as the central role of the United Nations in leading international efforts to assist the Afghan authorities in bringing lasting peace and prosperity to that country.

Kazakhstan welcomes the steps taken by the Government of Afghanistan to deepen interaction with international institutions involved in the counter-narcotics programme in Afghanistan, which resulted in the decline of opium cultivation in 2005. However, we still have a long way to go. During the last 10 years, the level of drug-related crimes in Central Asia has increased five-fold, and the situation tends to get worse. In our view, much work has to be done to remedy the situation with regard to illegal drug production and drug trafficking, both inside and outside of Afghanistan. We believe that one key element of the overall strategy must be the further enhancement of existing, and the establishment of new, anti-drug security belts.

With respect to the London Conference, which was attended by the Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Tokaev, at the invitation of the organizers, I would like to reiterate our deep gratitude to the Governments of the United Kingdom and Afghanistan for the outstanding preparation and organization of that event.

In London, Kazakhstan proposed concrete steps to support the implementation of the Afghan Compact. Kazakhstan is ready to grant scholarships to Afghan students, to sign a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of education and to launch a civil aviation training programme for Afghan pilots.

Kazakh companies are looking forward to participating in developing oil fields and in the construction of electricity transmission lines, pipelines, roads and houses. We hope that the established Kazakh-Afghan Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation will be instrumental in further stimulating bilateral economic interaction. Kazakhstan has a particular interest in assisting Afghanistan's farmers by providing them with grain, mineral

fertilizers, agricultural equipment and mini-complexes for processing agricultural products.

In our view, the accession of Afghanistan to the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in 2005 will greatly contribute to its further integration into the regional economy. That programme was initiated by President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan in 1997, with the support of the Secretary-General, and is being pursued under the auspices of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe.

I would like to reiterate our full support for the coordinated efforts under Afghan leadership aimed at building a peaceful, viable and prosperous State.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Like others, I too would like to welcome the presence of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tom Koenigs and to thank him for his briefing. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his extensive report on Afghanistan (S/2006/145).

There have been several achievements in Afghanistan during the Bonn process, in particular in building a democratic framework. However, as the Secretary-General points out, Afghanistan still faces tremendous challenges.

At the London Conference, we renewed our joint commitments to the Afghan people. Norway fully endorsed the Afghanistan Compact and the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Those documents provide the necessary framework for further development to take place in Afghanistan and for our continued long-term support. Norway was pleased to pledge financial support to Afghanistan for the coming five-year period.

A comprehensive approach to peacebuilding is necessary in Afghanistan, and Norway therefore fully supports the three pillars of the Afghanistan Compact. The plans are ambitious. The focus now must be on implementing the Development Strategy and on reaching the benchmarks for the Afghanistan Compact. For the Afghan people, it is important to see that peace brings development.

We have four remarks regarding the main tasks ahead.

First, Norway remains concerned about the deteriorating security situation. The increase in violent attacks — including suicide bombings — is worrying. However, that does not change our commitment to Afghanistan and to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). We are reinforcing our presence in the north, including in the provincial reconstruction team in Meymana. Norway believes that strengthening security-sector reform is vital for building sustainable peace. The rule of law must be provided through a strengthened police and judicial system.

Secondly, the illegal drug production and trade represent a major concern. Any failure to tackle that problem will undermine efforts to bring about sustainable peace and development. A comprehensive approach to the problem is necessary.

Thirdly, progress on administrative reform must continue, and the Afghan authorities must strengthen their capacity to provide services to the Afghan people. It is important that the authority of the central Government is projected throughout Afghanistan.

Fourthly, further efforts are needed to ensure that human rights obligations are respected. In particular, Norway would like to draw attention to the importance of respect for women's rights. Norway places great emphasis on resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, and recently launched a national action plan to strengthen its implementation. In Afghanistan, and also in other conflict-affected countries, coordinated and sustained efforts are needed to implement that particular resolution.

Norway welcomes the interim National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan, which builds on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reflects resolution 1325 (2000). Norway will provide support for the implementation of that Plan, inter alia by providing financial assistance through the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played an important role through the Bonn process and by assisting the Afghan Government in establishing the new targets of the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy

and the benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact. Norway welcomes the recommendations of the Secretary-General with regard to the future mandate of UNAMA. We support a continued and strengthened role for UNAMA in monitoring and coordinating international assistance. That includes a strengthened role for UNAMA in the consultation process between the donors and the Afghan authorities. We look forward to seeing UNAMA co-chairing the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. We would also like to underline the importance of the Board's being representative. The selection of its members must be based on a transparent and open process.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Norway's continued strong support for UNAMA in Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): New Zealand congratulates the people of Afghanistan on the completion of the Bonn Agreement. The inauguration of a fully elected National Assembly in December last year marked a major achievement in Afghanistan's path towards stable democracy.

New Zealand was pleased to participate in the London Conference and the launch of the Afghanistan Compact in February. The Conference provided an important opportunity for the international community to affirm its commitment to Afghanistan for at least the next five years. Looking ahead, it will be important to ensure that those commitments provide the appropriate combination of security and development assistance to the Afghani people.

In response to Security Council resolutions in 2001, New Zealand was one of the first countries to send military forces to Afghanistan as part of the international campaign against terrorism and is one of the largest per-capita contributors. The New Zealand contribution represented an important part of our commitment in support of international efforts for global security.

Over the last four years, hundreds of our defence force personnel have served in Afghanistan at a cost of around $130 million. We believe that capable and effective Afghan army and police forces are key to ensuring Afghanistan's long-term stability. To that end, New Zealand contributes to army and police training initiatives and to developing facilities in Bamyan province for effective policing.

In that context, New Zealand would like to applaud the contribution that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Member States have made in assisting in the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan. The job is not yet complete, and New Zealand looks forward to resolutions to extend the UNAMA mandate later this month. It is important that the UNAMA mandate complement the Afghanistan Compact already agreed at the London Conference.

New Zealand remains committed to supporting Afghanistan in its progress towards political and economic stability. We have increased our development assistance by $15 million over the past three years. The New Zealand contribution is targeted at projects or programmes carried out by non-governmental organizations and by United Nations agencies, with a focus on sustainable rural livelihoods, governance, human rights and maternal and child health.

New Zealand continues to support the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Human rights, including the rights of women, remain a principal area of concern for New Zealand. In that regard, we commend the increased level of participation by women in the September election as a significant step forward and encourage further initiatives to consolidate their participation in Afghanistan's political life.

Let me close by reiterating our admiration for the distance that Afghanistan as a nation has travelled in such a short time. But significant challenges still remain, and the role of the international community in supporting the efforts of the Afghan Government and people to overcome those challenges remains crucial.

Alongside others here today, New Zealand reaffirms its commitment to supporting the development and security needs of Afghanistan and to working with the Afghani people to create a safe, secure and more prosperous country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): At the outset, I would like to offer a very sincere and warm welcome to Mr. Tom Koenigs, to congratulate him on his appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for

Afghanistan, and to thank him for his comprehensive and instructive briefing. I would also like to assure the Special Representative that Italy will offer him, on the field and at the political level, the strongest support and cooperation. He can count on us.

On this occasion, our tribute should also go to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Arnault, who deserves our gratitude for the remarkable accomplishments achieved by the United Nations and the people of Afghanistan during his tenure.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. Our ongoing level of substantial engagement in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan prompts us to add a few complementary remarks.

The report of the Secretary-General draws a mixed picture of the latest developments in Afghanistan, mentioning a series of extraordinary successes in the political process, but reporting at the same time some worrying delays and difficulties in achieving our common goals in the areas of security, the rule of law, respect for human rights, the empowerment of women, and the fight against the production and trafficking of narcotics. Nevertheless, we are still convinced that the international community and the Government of Afghanistan are on the right track.

The success of the London Conference, including the finalization of the Afghanistan Compact and its endorsement by the Security Council, confirms that we all share the same basic view that the increasing ownership by the Afghan Government of the process of stabilizing and reconstructing the country must be supported by a sustained and coordinated effort of the international community, with the United Nations playing a central role. The successful holding of the parliamentary elections last September confirmed that such a joint approach is conducive to generating historic achievements. Italy has been at the front line of that endeavour, having held the command of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) since last August. The acknowledgement that the polling was not significantly affected by security incidents is therefore a matter of special pride for us.

Last August, before the Security Council, Italy stated that

> "the daunting challenges lying ahead should strengthen our commitment. Those challenges are related to the three vital and intertwined pillars of security, institution-building and economic development. No effort should be spared in tackling those three pillars in an integrated perspective" (*S/PV.5249, p. 33*).

We are therefore particularly glad that the Afghanistan Compact is built upon that very approach of complementarity between the pillars of security, governance and development. We cannot fail to stress at every possible occasion that an integrated approach addressing all three components is vital and that none of the pillars should be prioritized over the others while we define the principles and criteria that will inspire the follow-up to the provisions of the Afghanistan Compact. We are confident that the benchmarks contained in the Compact, as well as the early establishment of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, will play a crucial role in facilitating the timely and effective implementation of the document.

Italy is eager to contribute to such a process, making the best possible use of the experience and knowledge of the local context that we have been building over the past ten years, first as facilitator of the political process since the 1990s, and then as a major donor to the development programmes, the lead country and key partner for justice sector reform, a contributor to Operation Enduring Freedom, leader of the Herat provincial reconstruction team, and coordinator of all the provincial reconstruction teams in the western provinces. We are now studying how to sustain our current, extraordinary effort in terms of forces deployed on the ground — over 2,000 soldiers and the command of ISAF operations — for instance by employing our *carabinieri* and *guardia di finanza* to contribute to the training of military and border police. I will refrain here from adding to that long list of accomplishments further details on our contributions to humanitarian and development activities.

Turning to the proposals on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), as contained in the report before us, we fully support the general approach of ensuring continuity in the work of the Mission. We recommend pursuing consistency between UNAMA's structure and the organization of the Afghanistan Compact so as to guarantee full effectiveness in

fulfilling the follow-up and monitoring tasks vested in the Mission. We appreciate, in that regard, the inclusion of the mandate on the rule of law and justice reform among the responsibilities of the political office. We also welcome the proposed strengthening and expansion — security circumstances permitting — of the local offices. Strong cooperation with the provincial reconstruction teams should be foreseen as an essential component of such a process.

In conclusion, we look forward to an early endorsement by the Security Council of the recommendation contained in the report so as to allow UNAMA to continue to stand as a model for other peacebuilding processes.

Finally, let me recall once again the strong sentiments of brotherhood with the Afghan people that inspire our efforts and congratulate them for their unwavering commitment to rebuilding their country and to consolidating democracy. The challenges that we continue to face should also remind us that international peace and security are still at stake in Afghanistan and will be for some time to come.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Oh (Republic of Korea): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to join previous speakers in thanking you for having convened this open debate on the situation in Afghanistan.

Given that the Bonn process has just been completed, and that the new framework for partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community has been forged at the recent London Conference, the subject of today's debate is especially timely.

The recent London Conference was an important occasion for the international community to renew its commitment to providing political, security and financial assistance in support of the Afghan Government's priorities. We welcome the launching of the Afghanistan Compact, which establishes a framework for future progress and will play an important role in energizing the international community and mapping its support efforts. We hope that the Compact will be faithfully implemented.

While the Compact was launched for the recovery of Afghanistan, much more remains to be done in order to bring this about comprehensively. Among other concerns, a deteriorating security situation, coupled with uncontrolled violence and criminal drug trafficking, hamper not only the reconstruction process, but also the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

As for the security situation in Afghanistan, we are deeply concerned about the continuing instability in some areas of the country. Security throughout the country should be improved, and the Afghan security forces should be further strengthened to help in achieving that good. In this regard, we welcome the recent adoption by NATO of a revised operational plan allowing the continued expansion of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) across Afghanistan and providing training and operational support to Afghan security forces.

We are also concerned by the increasing threat that drug trafficking poses to the national security, social development and governance of Afghanistan. Unless the Afghan people can find other sources of income, many will be tempted to engage in that criminal business. We therefore share the view that the international community and the Afghan Government should work together to deal with this serious problem, which affects almost every aspect of Afghanistan's security and development. My Government welcomes the updated national drug control strategy presented by the Afghan Government at the London Conference and stands ready to join the international support for the strategy by contributing to the Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund.

To deal with these ongoing challenges, active efforts by the Afghan Government, in a spirit of Afghan ownership, must go hand in hand with unceasing assistance from the international community. In this regard, we note that many countries, including the Republic of Korea, announced new financial assistance for Afghanistan at the London Conference. We believe that these announcements demonstrate donors' continuing confidence in Afghanistan. This is a credit to President Karzai's leadership and to the clear vision evident in the Interim National Development Strategy.

The Republic of Korea has been a strong supporter of the reconstruction process of Afghanistan. Building upon our contribution of approximately $60 million in grant aid to Afghanistan over the past four years, Korea plans to expand its assistance to

Afghanistan in line with the new Afghanistan Compact. We have set aside $20 million for the next three years in order to further our projects in the areas of human resources development, agricultural and rural area development and public administration efficiency. In addition, reconstruction and medical units from my country have been contributing to the Afghan reconstruction process since their deployment in February 2002. We pledge to maintain our commitment to the reconstruction, development and stabilization of Afghanistan in the years ahead.

Mr. Laurin (Canada): Canada is pleased to have the opportunity to address the Security Council on Afghanistan. We express our thanks to you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate.

Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Tom Koenigs, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and assuring him of our fullest cooperation. We also take this opportunity to thank his predecessor, Mr. Jean Arnault, and to congratulate him on his singular achievements in Afghanistan.

Canada has made a clear commitment to the emergence of a stable, secure, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. We are among the largest contributors to Afghanistan's recovery and have been since 11 September 2001. Our contributions have been both human and financial, our support consistent and steadfast. Our strong commitment to the future of Afghanistan was highlighted by the visit by Prime Minister Harper to Afghanistan earlier this week. Indeed, Prime Minister Harper left Afghanistan only this morning, after having spent two days there, during which he met with President Karzai and senior officials, as well as with Canadian troops, diplomats and reconstruction workers. Prime Minister Harper's meeting with President Karzai was his first meeting with a head of State since taking office in January.

In the years since 2001, over 14,000 Canadian forces personnel have been deployed in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom missions. With the most recent deployment of 2,200 Canadian forces personnel, Canada assumed command of coalition forces in Kandahar and five surrounding southern provinces. This is our second tour in Kandahar. We have always deployed our soldiers where they were most needed. Our engagement has not been without cost. Some Canadians have lost their lives, and others have been injured. We understand what is at stake and are prepared to do our part, including in the more difficult regions of Afghanistan.

At the same time, we recognize that success cannot be ensured by military means alone, but rather requires the concomitant support to Afghan governance and development. For this reason, Afghanistan is Canada's largest recipient of development assistance. On 9 March, Canada announced an additional $40 million in development funding for Afghanistan, bringing Canada's total contributions to over $650 million. We also have a track record for disbursing our pledges. Canada took command of a provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar in August 2005 and recently almost doubled the size of its embassy, all of which are indications of the degree of our commitment.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for peace and security. The report rightly emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to engagement in Afghanistan, an approach that is enshrined in the documents recently adopted in London at the Afghanistan Conference. Canada welcomes the formation of a Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, an indispensable body that Canada championed and helped to design. The Board will ensure greater coherence of efforts by the Afghan Government with the international community in the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. We will look to the Board to focus on practical problem-solving issues, drawing lessons from those most heavily engaged, identifying any gaps as they emerge and ensuring coherence across the three independent pillars of the Compact. We will thus make sure that the Board is supported by an effective secretariat.

In supporting the Compact, Canada will focus on three main areas: security, governance and poverty reduction. If we are to succeed, it will take both military and civilian engagement. With their international and Afghan partners, the Canadian forces have helped to create a secure environment in which nascent Afghan governance institutions can begin to grow. That support has also allowed Canadian and other civilians deployed to Afghanistan to actively support the complex task of institution-building. It is only by building effective and accountable institutions in Kabul and across Afghanistan that we can ensure that our investment lasts long beyond our engagement.

(*spoke in French*)

The acts of violence perpetrated recently in certain regions of Afghanistan show that now is not the time to let down our guard. Al-Qaida and the Taliban remain active, challenging the Afghan and international security forces. The resort to suicide bomb attacks is a worrisome development that requires an immediate response, including on the part of Afghanistan's neighbours.

At the same time, the narcotics trade is jeopardizing governmental institutions. Corruption is eroding the people's trust. The foundations for an effective, transparent and accessible system have still not been laid. These threats are closely linked to drug money, contributing to corruption and subverting the rule of law.

The response must be robust and multiform. The establishment of a responsible and democratic Government that respects the rights of individuals, gives its citizens a voice in that area and undertakes measures to fulfil their aspirations is essential to any comprehensive solution to these problems.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a crucial role to play in strengthening all the new governance institutions of the Afghan State, including through capacity-building. To that end, UNAMA must increase its own capacities to intervene on the ground in the areas of individual rights, respect for the rule of law, the police and justice. Canada continues to support UNAMA by aiding the efforts of police and corrections advisers, and we hope that other countries will do likewise.

Inspired by the resolve of the Afghan people to build a better future for themselves, Canada remains prepared to help Afghanistan carry out the commitments set out in the Compact.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to felicitate you, Sir, and the delegation of Argentina on the skilful manner in which Argentina is guiding the work of the Security Council this month. May I also congratulate Ambassador Bolton and the United States delegation for the successful and eventful United States presidency last month. I would also like to wish Ambassador Wang Guangya of China a successful presidency next month.

The Pakistan delegation expresses its gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tom Koenigs, for his briefing to the Council today and to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2006/145). Let me also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Koenigs' predecessor, Mr. Jean Arnault. Pakistan fully supports the continuation of the important role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We also support the international security assistance for Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General's report outlines the considerable progress made in Afghanistan in fulfilling the benchmarks of the Bonn process. We wish to congratulate President Karzai and the fraternal people of Afghanistan on those achievements.

Unfortunately, there are also many outstanding challenges that remain to be overcome — especially security, narcotics, crime, warlordism and development. The Afghanistan Compact, adopted at the London Conference, endorsed a comprehensive plan to address those challenges in order to restore peace and security and to build prosperity in Afghanistan. The commitments undertaken by the Afghan Government and its international partners under the Compact will, we hope, be fulfilled.

Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoy a close and symbiotic relationship rooted in geography, history, shared ethnicity and a common faith. Our destinies are inextricably linked. Peace in Afghanistan reinforces peace and tranquillity in Pakistan. Peace in Afghanistan will enable both nations to serve as the bridge for trade and commerce between Central Asia, South Asia and beyond. The success of the endeavours for peace and prosperity in Afghanistan is therefore vital for Pakistan.

More than 25 years ago, the Pakistani people welcomed nearly 4 million of their Afghan brothers with open arms. We hosted them mostly without the generosity of external assistance. Three million Afghans still remain in Pakistan. In accordance with our traditions and with the principles of humanitarian law, Pakistan has not obliged them to return involuntarily to their country. Yet return they should, and we trust that conditions will soon be created that will enable them to do so in dignity and honour.

As history will recount, Pakistan's hospitality during Afghanistan's most difficult years created enduring problems for Pakistan, including the rise of extremism and the presence of terrorism. We are addressing those phenomena resolutely and, we believe, successfully.

Pakistan has adopted short- and long-term strategies to address the problems of terrorism and extremism. We have captured more than 600 Al-Qaida terrorists, most of whom infiltrated Pakistan after 11 September 2001. We have acted resolutely against Taliban terrorism, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1267 (1999). We have deployed more than 80,000 troops on our western border with Afghanistan to prevent the infiltration or ex-filtration by Al-Qaida and other terrorists. Concurrently, we are investing in infrastructure and socio-economic developments of these so-far unsettled frontier regions. Pakistan has also launched major military operations in some of our tribal areas to eliminate the presence of foreign terrorists and their supporters. More than 600 Pakistani soldiers have lost their lives in the 75 operations conducted by Pakistani security forces. I should like to recall that those casualties are greater than all of those suffered by Coalition forces in Afghanistan.

No one, therefore, can question Pakistan's commitment and determination to succeed in defeating terrorism. A comprehensive approach is required to address the challenges of terrorism and criminal violence and insurgency in Afghanistan. The terrorist and other violent incidents in Afghanistan are taking place not only in the south and south-east but in various other parts of the country. They can be prevented by effective action within Afghanistan by the Afghan national forces and international coalition forces. To ensure success, the root causes of such violence — extremism, warlordism, the narcotics trade and local rivalries — will all need to be addressed patiently and sincerely. The failure to do so cannot be externalized.

Certainly, border security and control is essential in order to prevent the infiltration into Pakistan or Afghanistan of terrorists or other violent criminals. As I said, Pakistan has deployed 80,000 troops to do so on our side. A matching effort is required on the other side if the hammer and anvil strategy is to work. Moreover, this endeavour cannot succeed without close cooperation in intelligence-sharing, in real time. We can achieve this in the Tripartite Commission, as well as through close and constant bilateral contacts.

Pakistan has also decided to take additional actions. We will fence parts of the border to reinforce interdiction by our forces. We will also seek to eliminate terrorist elements that may be located in Afghan refugee camps and elsewhere among the refugee population.

Together with intelligence-sharing, Pakistan expects its partners to enhance Pakistan's capabilities for interdiction and counter-terrorism through the provision of electronic and other equipment, especially additional helicopters, with a view to enhancing mobility and reaction time. Our requirements have been conveyed to our partners.

Finally, joint counter-terrorism operations must be conducted with full adherence to the principles of international law, including those incorporated in the Kabul Declaration, regarding respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. Pakistan will not countenance any violation of those principles.

Pakistan believes that Afghanistan, with the support of the international community and through cooperation with its neighbours, can succeed in meeting the challenges of security, governance and development. Pakistan wishes to make the maximum contribution to the success of the Afghanistan Compact. An essential component of the Compact is to ensure sustainable and rapid development in Afghanistan.

In London, Pakistan supplemented its earlier commitment of $200 million with an additional pledge of $50 million for Afghanistan's development. We have made special arrangements to facilitate transit trade to and from Afghanistan. Bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan was $1.2 billion last year, which we hope will grow to $2 billion this year. We have reached an agreement with the United States on the creation of industrial zones on the border with Afghanistan whose goods will be allowed duty-free access to the United States market.

Pakistan is convinced that, given mutual goodwill and enhanced trust, Afghanistan and Pakistan will be able to cooperate closely to build peace and security in the region and ensure prosperity for our peoples, whose historical and fraternal bonds are strong enough to withstand the vicissitudes of politics and posturing by

those who wish to sow the seeds of division and discord between us.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me and the delegation of Argentina.

I give the floor to Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to respond to comments and questions.

Mr. Koenigs: First of all, I would like to thank Council members very much for the continued support that they have expressed, unanimously, for the peace process in Afghanistan and for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. On a personal note, I would like to thank the Council very much for the warm welcome and the support expressed for me in meeting the difficult challenges of the job that I have taken on.

I appreciate very much the suggestion of the representative of Japan regarding a visit by the Security Council to Afghanistan, which would express once again the commitment of the Council, and we will do everything to prepare ourselves for such a visit.

All speakers expressed — and we share — concerns about the security situation, violations of human rights, the inequality with regard to women's rights and issues relating to poppy cultivation and drug trafficking. Be assured that this is a major challenge for the Afghan Government, for the donor community as a whole and for the United Nations and all of its funds and agencies, including UNAMA.

We will continue to develop our activities on the basis of the principle of Afghan ownership with regard to all development in Afghanistan. We will step back, behind the leadership of the Afghan Government, in each and every operation. In addition to the briefing that I gave, I was asked to explain some of the questions posed by the representative of Denmark, and I would like to respond. Yes, we will continue the active dialogue with the Government institutions at the national level and, particularly, the provincial level. Some speakers commented on our proposal for the enlargement of the UNAMA presence in the provinces. After the election, some of the locations were vacated by international assistance personnel, so some of the provinces have space which can be utilized by the agencies and by sub-offices in the field through UNAMA. We would like to use some of those facilities and co-locate with United Nations agencies already present so as to increase both the visibility of international support and assistance to the political institutions of the Afghan Government. This inclusivity might improve the security situation in those areas, because one of our experiences in the north was that, where there is an international presence, where there is a Government presence and where there is an office from our side, the security situation can improve. Nevertheless, I know that we have to assess the security situation prevailing in those provinces before we make that outreach. We will not create new regional offices, but from the regional offices we would like to reach out with small entities into those places where that is advisable.

The split between the two pillars in UNAMA is more administrative than substantive in nature. Through my leadership, I will ensure that they cooperate so that human rights and gender, as overarching elements in the respective pillars, are not separated. I shall ensure that there is close coordination between those two elements of our mandate.

I will certainly prioritize reasonable and sophisticated recruitment, in particular as regards our political staff in the region. In coming to the Mission, I learned that the human capital and quality of our staff is the main asset in our efficiency and success. The respect we have gained, not only in the international community but in particular among the Afghan authorities and people in general, is due to the high quality of our staff. We will do everything to maintain it, and even to strengthen it.

The representative of Slovakia asked about how we will compose the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, and when it will be operational. I would be pleased if it could be operational as soon as possible. I have spoken on that matter to the President of Afghanistan, who has expressed the same opinion. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to reconcile the two principles for such a joint coordination and monitoring board: effectiveness and representativity. The representativity pertains to donors, troop contributors and regional stakeholders. Work is still in progress, and I will take the opportunity provided by my visit to New York to speak with some of the stakeholders in question.

I have very much appreciated the fact that the representative of the United States stressed the importance of human capital development in Afghanistan. That is one of our main points to be stressed in the future, because Afghan ownership means the development of Afghan capacity in the country. We have dedicated our efforts in Kabul and the provinces to that aim.

Finally, let me once again express my gratitude for the unanimous support UNAMA enjoys from the members of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Koenigs for his clarifications and comments. I also thank him once again for being with us. We hope to see him soon, once we adopt the resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, at the end of March.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.